



GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

141TH ANNUAL REPORT

2019

**Chairman Lauren “Bubba” McDonald
Vice Chairman Tim Echols
Commissioner Chuck Eaton
Commissioner Tricia Pridemore
Commissioner Jason Shaw**

2019 GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION



Commissioners (left to right) Chuck Eaton, Jason Shaw, Tricia Pridemore, Vice-chair Tim Echols, and Chairman Lauren “Bubba” McDonald

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR	3
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION PROFILES	4
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION LEADERSHIP TEAM	9
MISSION AND HISTORY OF THE COMMISSION	10
HIGHLIGHTS OF 2019	12
UTILITIES DIVISION	15
ELECTRIC UNIT	16
NATURAL GAS UNIT	22
TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNIT	31
CONSUMER AFFAIRS UNIT	34
INTERNAL CONSULTANTS UNIT	39
FACILITIES PROTECTION UNIT	41
ADMINISTRATION DIVISION	45
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY	45
BUDGET AND FISCAL OFFICE	45
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE	46
OFFICE OF OPERATIONS SUPPORT	46
PUBLIC INFORMATION AND LEGISLATIVE LIAISON OFFICE	47
NOTEWORTHY COMMISSION ACTIVITIES IN 2019	49
AGENCY BUDGET	53
PSC ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2020	55

LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR

April 1, 2020

The Honorable Brian Kemp
Governor
203 State Capitol
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Dear Governor Kemp,

The Georgia Public Service Commission presents its 2019 Annual Report, pursuant to O.C.G.A. §46-2-31, which highlights the agency's major activities and achievements during the past year regarding the state's regulated utilities, telecommunications and infrastructure protection.

2019 was one of the busiest years on record for the Commission. We have employees who have been on staff for 20 and 30 years. None remember a year where we had to approve Georgia Power's Integrated Resource Plan and settle base rate cases for Georgia Power and Atlanta Gas Light – all this while continuing to monitor nation's largest construction project, nuclear reactors 3 and 4 at Plant Vogtle.

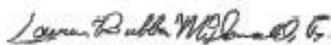
The Commission also contributed over \$1.9 million to the state's treasury in fiscal year 2019 as a result of its enforcement activities and the statutory regulatory assessment fee.

As we move into 2020, we have had a change in the chairman position. Commissioner Chuck Eaton has taken over that role. Already, he has worked closely with your staff to honor your intent to lower budgets while trying to keep essential positions needed for pipeline safety programs. Of course, the Covid-19 virus has put all of our futures in a state of uncertainty.

At the Commission, we do keep an eye to the future. Vogtle 3 and 4 are expected to come online by the ends of 2021 and 2022 respectively. This will see a new workload for the Commission and staff beyond even what we saw in 2019.

In the meantime, the Commission continues to ensure Georgia consumers receive the best possible value in utility and telecommunication services, while enforcing natural gas pipeline safety and protecting the utility infrastructure from damage.

Respectfully submitted,



Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Chairman
Tim G. Echols, Vice-chairman
Chuck Eaton, Commissioner,
Tricia Pridemore, Commissioner
Jason Shaw, Commissioner

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION PROFILES



Chuck Eaton

Commissioner Since: January 1, 2007

Elected: 2006, Re-elected: 2012, 2018

Serves Through: December 31, 2024

Republican, Fulton County, Georgia

Commissioner, 2019 Georgia Public Service Commission

In 2018, Chuck Eaton was elected to his third term on the Georgia Public Service Commission. He was first elected in December 2006 and was one of only two statewide Republican candidates in the nation to beat an incumbent that year. In 2012, after Eaton was re-elected to a second term on the Commission, he was named PSC Chairman. In 2014, his fellow Commissioner's re-elected him to a second two-year term as Chairman. He also served as Chair in 2008.

Prior to his service on the Commission, Eaton worked in real estate sales in Atlanta. Before that, he was an account executive for a packaging manufacturer in LaGrange, Georgia.

Eaton has been involved in the political process for a long time. In 1992, he served as Congressman Phil Crane's Deputy Campaign Manager. In Troup County he successfully managed multiple campaigns for former Representative Jeff Brown. He is a graduate of the Coverdell Leadership Institute – a statewide organization founded by late U.S. Senator Paul D. Coverdell to strengthen leadership and political skills.

He is the past President of the Buckhead Forest Civic Association and was a representative to the Atlanta Neighborhood Planning Unit "B" – a citizen group that makes recommendations on zoning, land use, public safety and community issues. In Troup County he served on the Board of Directors for Troup Haven House, a children's shelter.

Eaton earned a degree in accounting from the University of Alabama. During his first term as a PSC Commissioner, Eaton recognized the judicial nature of the Commission's work. In order to gain a better understanding of regulatory and administrative law proceedings, he enrolled in night classes for law school at Georgia State University. He earned his law degree in 2012 and is admitted to practice law in Georgia.

Eaton lives in Atlanta with his wife Erika, their daughters Lydia and Lily and their two rescue dogs. When not working at the Public Service Commission he enjoys spending time with his family. The Eatons are members of Peachtree Road United Methodist Church.



Tim G. Echols

Commissioner Since: January 1, 2011

Elected: 2010, Re-elected: 2016

Serves Through: December 31, 2022

Republican, Hoschton, Georgia

Vice-chair, 2019 Georgia Public Service Commission

A younger Tim Echols was selected by the Atlanta Airport Rotary Club as "Student of the Year" from his high school in 1978. While at the luncheon, he met Truett Cathy, a member of the Atlanta Airport Rotary Club. After the meeting, Truett invited Tim to come by his Hapeville office and there gave him a set of motivational tapes and a challenge. Echols said the tapes changed his life and as a result of listening to Zig Ziglar and his teaching, Tim set a goal to be a statewide elected official.

Shortly after graduating from UGA, Tim and his wife Windy founded TeenPact, a training experience for conservative high school students. The program began at the Georgia Capitol and now operates in 45 states having trained 50,000 students. After building TeenPact, Echols ran for and was elected to statewide office in 2010 serving as Public Service Commissioner.

The PSC's primary job is energy regulation. When he took office, Georgia was 34th in solar power. Now, 9 years later the state is 10th in the nation in approved solar. Echols created the Clean Energy Roadshow that has traveled the state every summer for the last eight years. This educational event travels to cities around the state helping commuters, businesses and municipal governments evaluate alternative fuel for their transportation and residential use.

Tim authored the December 2017 motion to keep Plant Vogtle moving forward. He believes carbon-free nuclear energy plus solar is the way forward for Georgia. He has represented the United States at the World Nuclear Exhibition for the last six years.

Tim has been at the forefront in fighting human sex trafficking. He created the "Unholy Tour" that helps policy makers see first-hand the harms of human trafficking. As a part of his efforts to educate the public about the harms of trafficking, Echols created the Wilberforce Fellowship that meets once per year at Georgia's oldest state park, Indian Springs. Tim and Judge Tim Batten head up this effort.

Tim has a weekly radio show called Energy Matters airing on Cox Media Group and back episodes can be found at [WGAU Radio - Energy Matters](#)

Tim and his wife, Windy, have been married 37 years and they have seven children. He has 3 degrees from the University of Georgia and lives in Hoschton, Georgia.



Lauren “Bubba” McDonald

Commissioner Since: January 1, 2009

Elected: 1998, 2008; Re-elected: 2014

Serves Through: December 31, 2020

Republican, Clarkesville, Georgia

Chairman, 2019 Georgia Public Service Commission

McDonald, who served 20 years as a state Representative, was appointed to the Commission in June 1998 by Governor Zell Miller to fill a vacated post and then re-elected in a special mid-term election in November 1998. He held the seat until 2002. In 2008 and in 2014, Georgians again elected McDonald to serve on the Commission.

McDonald has a deep knowledge of the energy industry. He puts that knowledge to work as a member of the Electric Committee of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and as an executive member of the Nuclear Waste Strategy Coalition.

During his time on the Commission McDonald has presided over the advent of solar power in Georgia resulting in the state becoming one of the top five fastest growing in the nation for solar energy. He has accomplished this through a conservative and thoughtful free-market approach without putting upward pressure on rates and without state-sponsored financial incentives. In 2013, Georgia had virtually no solar power on the grid. McDonald was able to garner support to add 525 megawatts of solar energy to the portfolio of the state’s investor owned utility. Currently, utility companies are erecting solar power facilities that will provide a total of 4,610 megawatts of solar energy by 2022. McDonald has also supported the construction of solar facilities at six of Georgia’s military bases, contributing to national security and helping to protect the bases from future base closure proposals.

McDonald is a graduate of the University of Georgia with a BBA in Business. He also served six years in the Georgia Air National Guard. He owns businesses in the private sector and is married to Shelley McDonald. He was married to the late Sunny Nivens McDonald for 45 years. He has a son, Lauren, three grandchildren, and four step-grandchildren.



Tricia Pridemore

Commissioner Since: February 21, 2018

Elected: November 2018

Serves through: December 31, 2024

Republican, Marietta, Georgia

Commissioner, 2019 Georgia Public Service Commission

Tricia Pridemore was appointed to the Commission by Governor Nathan Deal in 2018 and won the Republican primary and the general election later that year. In addition to her duties with the Commission, she serves on the Advisory Board of the Financial Research Institute at the University of Missouri, the Gas Committee of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and the NARUC Subcommittee on Education and Research. She is also the NARUC liaison to the University of Wisconsin School of Public Utilities.

Commissioner Pridemore is a businesswoman with a background in technology, consulting and workforce development. Since the acquisition of Accucast, the software company she founded with her husband, she served on the Georgia World Congress Center Board of Governors, the 2011 Transition team of Governor Deal and co-chaired both of Governor Deal's Inaugural Committees in 2011 and 2015.

Commissioner Pridemore formerly served as the Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Workforce Development and started Georgia's skilled trade initiative aimed at encouraging careers in the energy, transportation and construction trades. She was also a member of the Cobb Galleria Authority Board of Governors.

Commissioner Pridemore earned a bachelor's degree from Kennesaw State University. She and her high school sweetheart turned husband, Michael, reside in Marietta, Georgia and are members of Mount Paran Church in Atlanta.



Jason Shaw

Commissioner Since: January 3, 2019

Appointed: November 20, 2018

Serves through: December 31, 2020

Republican, Lanier County, Georgia

Commissioner, 2019 Georgia Public Service Commission

James S. “Jason” Shaw Jr., a native of Lanier County, was appointed to the Public Service Commission by Governor Nathan Deal and sworn in on January 3, 2019. Commissioner Shaw lives on a farm near Lakeland with his wife Katy Miller Shaw, from Valdosta, and their children, Anne Harvey and Slaton Shaw. He is the owner of Shaw Insurance Services Inc. and a founder of Georgia Olive Farms Inc., both of Lakeland. He and his family are members of Unity United Methodist Church where he serves as Finance Chairman.

Commissioner Shaw earned a Bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Georgia and is a graduate of the Leadership Georgia class of 2004, the Leadership Lanier class of 2003, and the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership class of 2000. In 2011, he was recognized as one of Georgia Trend magazine’s “40 under 40.” Commissioner Shaw maintains a dedication to community service. He served as the Lanier County Lions Club President in 2001 and as the Lakeland/Lanier County Chamber of Commerce President in 2006. In 2018, the Lanier County Lions Club named him “Flatlander of the Year” and the Lakeland/Lanier County Chamber of Commerce named him a member of its Board of Directors for life. He is also a past director of the Greater Valdosta Area United Way and a past trustee of the Valdosta Technical College Foundation.

Commissioner Shaw formally represented Georgia House District 176 (Atkinson, Lanier, Lowndes and Ware counties) for four terms since his election in 2010. In his tenure with the Georgia General Assembly he served four years as Chairman of the Georgia Legislative Rural Caucus, a bipartisan group that takes a leading role in issues and legislation that impact the state’s rural communities.

He also served as Chairman of the House Appropriations Transportation Committee, Chairman of the House Industry and Labor Committee, and as a member of the House Economic Development & Tourism Committee; House Game, Fish, and Parks Committee; House Insurance Committee; House Small Business Development Committee; and House Transportation Committee as well as the House Rural Development Council and the House Transit Commission.

In addition to his public service, professional, and civic responsibilities, Commissioner Shaw enjoys spending time with his wife and children. He also enjoys outdoor activities, including: hunting, fishing, and golfing.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION LEADERSHIP TEAM

DECEMBER 31, 2019

Commissioners

Lauren “Bubba” McDonald, Chairman
Tim G. Echols, Vice-Chairman
Chuck Eaton, Commissioner
Tricia Pridemore, Commissioner
Jason Shaw, Commissioner

Administration Division

Deborah Flannagan, Executive Director
Reece McAlister, Executive Secretary
Terry Pritchett, Chief Financial Officer
Cheryl Vinson, Human Resources Officer
Jada Brock, Director, Office of Operations Support
Bill Edge, Public Information Officer and Legislative Liaison (Retired, April 2019)
Tom Krause, Public Information Officer and Legislative Liaison (Hired, April 2019)

Utilities Division

Tom Bond, Director, Utilities Division
Leon Bowles, Director, Telecommunications Unit
Pandora Epps, Director, Internal Consultants Unit
Claudette Willingham, Manager, Consumer Affairs Unit
Sheree Kernizan, Director, Electric Unit
Nancy Tyer, Director, Natural Gas Unit
Michelle Thebert, Director, Facilities Protection Unit

MISSION AND HISTORY OF THE COMMISSION

MISSION

The Commission is a quasi-legislative, quasi-judicial agency comprised of five Commissioners elected statewide. The Commission's mission is to exercise its authority and influence to ensure that consumers receive safe, reliable and reasonably priced telecommunications, electric and natural gas services from financially viable and technically competent companies. The Commission's regulatory activities are primarily focused on investor-owned natural gas and electric power utilities. The Commission has the authority to set rates, require long-range energy plans, provide for the safety of natural gas pipelines and protect underground utility systems from damage.

Over the past three decades, growth, competition and technological advances have significantly changed the Commission's role. With some retail market segments of the telecommunications and natural gas industries open to competition, the Commission facilitates market development, educates consumers, arbitrates complaints among competitors and monitors the effectiveness of the competitive markets.

HISTORY

On October 14, 1879, Georgia became one of the first states to establish a regulatory body to resolve complications resulting from railroad expansion and competition. Created as the Railroad Commission of Georgia, the Governor originally appointed the three members of this body for the purpose of regulating railway freight and passenger rates.

As electricity, natural gas and telecommunications evolved from novelties into major necessities for our modern society so did the roles and responsibilities of the Commission. Major expansions of the Commission's jurisdiction took place between 1890 and 1935. In 1891, legislation added telegraph and express companies to the Commission's jurisdiction.

The years 1906 and 1907 saw two major changes to the Commission's make-up. In 1906 the Legislature allowed the voters to elect the Commissioners for six-year terms and in 1907 lawmakers expanded the Commission to five members. Also in 1906 the Legislature gave the Commission authority over docks and wharves, as well as telephone, natural gas and electric companies. Cognizant of the changing role of this regulatory body, the General Assembly in 1922 changed the name of the Railroad Commission of Georgia to the Georgia Public Service Commission. The Legislature further expanded the Commission's jurisdiction in 1931 when it authorized the Commission to regulate the trucking industry.

In 1943, the Commission became a constitutional body (Article 4, Section 1, 1983 Georgia Constitution). Its powers and duties are established by legislation and described in Title 46 of the Official Code of Georgia. The Legislature in 1998 required the five Commissioners to reside in separate districts though they remain elected by the voters statewide. This change was effective for the 2000 elections.

The years between 2001 and 2012 saw the legislature approve major changes in the Commission's jurisdiction over transportation. In 2001, legislation transferred the Commission's Transportation Division to the new Department of Motor Vehicle Safety. In 2005, the Commission resumed regulatory jurisdiction over household goods movers, limousines for hire,

passenger carriers and nonconsensual towing following passage of House Bill 501. In 2012, the Legislature passed House Bill 865 which transferred Commission jurisdiction over household good movers, passenger buses, limousines and non-consensual towing to the Department of Public Safety's Motor Carrier Compliance Division.

In 2002, Earleen Sizemore became the first woman to serve on the Commission following her appointment to the Commission after the death of longtime Commissioner Bob Durden on May 2, 2002. Later that year in the general election, Angela Speir became the first woman elected to the Commission.

In 2009, the Commission approved the construction of Georgia's, and the nation's, first new nuclear-powered generation facilities since the 1970's. Both of the two units under construction at Plant Vogtle are scheduled to enter commercial operation in 2021 and 2022. In 2019, the Commission continued to monitor this multi-billion-dollar nuclear construction project.

Legislation in 2012 changed the method of selecting the Commission Chairman. Senate Bill 483 allowed the Commission to elect its own chairman for a two-year term with the possibility of one additional two-year term. In 2013 Commissioner Chuck Eaton was then elected Chairman in 2013. He was re-elected Chair in 2015 and served through 2017. Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald was elected Chair in 2018 and served through 2019.

In June 2014, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released for comment the agency's draft of its Clean Power Plan rules under section 111 (d) of the Clean Air Act of 1970. The Commission went on record opposing this rule. In August 2015, the EPA released the final rule which accorded more favorable treatment of two new nuclear units at Plant Vogtle in meeting Georgia's required reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.

In August 2015, Southern Company, the parent company of Georgia Power Company, announced plans to acquire AGLC Resources, the parent company of Atlanta Gas Light Company. The Commission approved the acquisition in April 2016.

The Commission on December 21, 2017 approved the continued construction of Georgia Power's Plant Vogtle Nuclear Power Plant Construction Project. The Commission accepted the Company's revised schedule and forecasted costs.

In 2018 longtime Commissioner and Chairman Stan Wise resigned effective February 20, 2018 and Governor Nathan Deal appointed Tricia Pridemore to fill the vacancy. Pridemore was elected to a full six-year term in November 2018. Also in November 2018, veteran Commissioner Doug Everett announced his retirement from the Commission effective December 31, 2018. Governor Deal appointed State Representative Jason Shaw to fill the remainder of Everett's term through December 31, 2020. He was sworn in on January 3, 2019.

The Commission had one of the busiest years on record in 2019 with the three-year approval of Georgia Power's Integrated Resource Plan, base rate cases for both Georgia Power and Atlanta Gas Light, and continuing the monitoring of Plant Vogtle.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2019

The highlights of the Commission's major activities and achievements during 2019 regarding its Utility Regulation, Facilities Protection and Administration Programs are set forth below. A more detailed report from each Commission organizational unit follows this summary.

ELECTRIC

The Commission held proceedings in Georgia Power's 2019 Base Rate Case. Georgia Power requested a \$2.2 billion rate increase for the three-year period 2020-2022. After hearing testimony from many witnesses, the Commission made its decision which provides for no rate increase in 2020 and allows an increase of \$1.77 billion over 2021 and 2022. The basic service charge will not increase in 2020 and will increase just \$2 in 2021 and \$2 in 2022. The average Georgia Power household using 1,000 kilowatt hours per month of electricity can expect to see their monthly bill rise by about \$5.89 per month, according to Georgia Power.

In 2019, the Commission continued to actively monitor the construction of the two new nuclear units at Georgia Power Company's Plant Vogtle near Waynesboro, Georgia. A settlement between the Commission's Public Interest Advocacy Staff and Georgia Power calls for combining the next two Vogtle Construction Monitoring Reports. The Commission Staff and its consultants filed their own assessment of the re-baselining on July 31, 2019. The Company filed a combined VCM 20 and 21 on August 31, 2019. As part of its decision, the Commission verified and approved \$526.4 in expenditures by Georgia Power. This decision is not a ruling on whether the expenditures are prudent but only acknowledges that the Company has spent the funds on the project.

2019 also saw the approval of Georgia Power's Integrate Resource Plan. Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §46-3A-2) requires Georgia Power Company to file an updated IRP every three years which details how it will supply the state's electric generation needs. Georgia Power filed its IRP with the Commission in January 2019. Among other items, the Company had initially recommended adding 1,000 megawatts of renewable energy to the grid, the vast majority in the form of utility-scale solar energy. In an agreement reached with Commission Staff, that amount was increased to 1,650 megawatts. PSC Chairman Lauren "Bubba" McDonald made a motion to increase the renewable/solar energy procurement to 2,210 megawatts, the largest increase in renewable energy in Georgia's history. The 2,210 megawatts will nearly double Georgia's level of renewable energy by the end of 2022.

NATURAL GAS

At the end of 2019, Georgia had sixteen (16) Commission-certified natural gas marketers actively serving firm customers in the Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGLC) delivery area. During this time, both AGLC and Liberty expanded their service areas and increased their customer base throughout Georgia.

On June 3, 2019, AGL filed its 2019 rate case seeking to have its rates increased. AGL included sixteen sets of direct testimony. AGLC requested a \$96.3 million rate increase. Several months of hearings followed. During the December 19, 2019 Administrative Session, the Commission approved a \$65.3 million rate increase but also required AGLC to significantly increase its customer service. In 2020, AGLC announced it was hiring 200 new employees to address the Commission's issues with customer service.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

In 2019 the Commission granted certificates of authority to nine competitive local exchange providers, three inter-exchange service providers, three long-distance resellers, and one institutional telecommunication service provider. The total number of active certificates in 2018 was 873, distributed among industry segments, as follows: 219 resellers, 41 alternative operator service providers, 230 competitive local exchange providers, 80 inter-exchange service providers, 245 payphone service providers, 23 institutional telecommunication service providers and over 35 incumbent local exchange service providers. The Commission also approved total disbursements for the 24th UAF year of \$30,309,022.

FACILITIES PROTECTION

During 2019, the Pipeline Safety Inspectors of the Facilities Protection Unit monitored and inspected over 1,200 miles of transmission lines, nearly 44,000 miles of distribution pipeline, and more than 2 million service lines for transporting natural gas to Georgia customers within 147 counties. The pipeline safety inspectors evaluated operator compliance with state and federal pipeline safety regulations by conducting 230 inspections, including 16 Anti-Drug & Alcohol inspections, over 1,100 inspection days.

Challenges in 2019 continued in Facilities Protection, as the group continued to enforce the Georgia Underground Facilities Protection Act, Federal, and State rules and regulations, as well as implementing continuing regulations, while facing staff turn-over and the loss of pipeline safety inspectors to the private sector. Given all these factors, the Staff was still able to conduct 23 presentations delivered to approximately 1,094 attendees in 2019.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The Consumer Affairs Unit is the primary path for consumers to contact the Commission to make their concerns and issues known. In 2019 the Consumer Affairs Unit continued its Outreach activities by giving presentations to community groups and organizations. The main method that consumers use to contact the Commission is by telephone. The Consumer Affairs Unit has a total of six (6) staff members that answer all calls coming through our Automated Call Distribution (ACD) system. Incoming Spanish calls are routed to bilingual staff members (one member is located in the Consumer Affairs Unit) for assistance. The total number of calls reported by the Commission's Automated Call Distributor (ACD) for 2019 was 34,818 (this includes Spanish calls). Internet/E-mail contacts continued to be the second preferred method of contacting the Commission in 2019 with a total of 8,256 contacts. The total paper correspondence in 2019 (letters and faxes) was 448. The Office of Consumer Affairs met with approximately 16 consumers in person to discuss issues with their bills, deposits, and to share information on energy assistance and Lifeline. In all, Consumer Affairs representatives received 43,538 inquiries, complaints, and opinions from the general public in 2019.

INTERNAL CONSULTANTS

The Internal Consultants Unit of the Utilities Division provided expertise to the Electric, Natural Gas and Telecommunications Units. During 2019, Internal Consultants served on several major cases which included the Plant Vogtle Units 3 and 4 Construction Monitoring, Docket No. 29849; the Georgia Power Company 2019 IRP, Docket No. 42310; the Georgia Power

Company 2019 Demand-Side Management Plan, Docket No. 42311; the Georgia Power Company 2019 Rate Case, Docket No. 42516; and, the Atlanta Gas Light Company 2019 Rate Case, Docket No. 42315. IC Staff provided expert testimony as part of the Public Interest Advocacy Staff for all of these dockets and served as Commissioner Advisory Staff as well.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

During 2019 the Administration Division continued to efficiently maximize its task to support the Commission's mission. The Executive Director heads the Division and oversees the Executive Secretary, Budget and Fiscal Office, Human Resources Office, Public Information/Legislative Liaison Office and Operations Support Office.

In 2019, the Budget and Fiscal Office accurately monitored and effectively managed a budget with revenues and expenses of \$11.9 million dollars.

In 2019, the Executive Secretary's Office opened 611 new case dockets; processed 4,364 filed documents; and filed 693 orders prepared for the Chairman's and Executive Secretary's signature. The Commission also held 81 public hearings constituting either a quorum of the Commission or a hearing officer assigned by the Commission.

The Public Information Officer/Legislative Liaison issued more than 50 media advisories and monitored the General Assembly's bills regarding rural broadband.

Human Resources reports very little fluctuation in staff numbers for 2019. The PIO retired after more than 18 years with the agency, and a seasoned individual with former State experience was hired to replace him. The Commission also hired one Pipeline Safety Inspector. With each passing year, more Commission staffers get closer to retirement age. The Commission has staff with 30 or more years of service. With this in mind, several employees are expected to retire over the next few years. Human Resources plans to be a strategic partner in assisting the Commission to replenish those with highly qualified individuals.

The Office of Operations Support continued to improve the infrastructure and overall efficiency during 2019. Our team deployed the new website <https://psc.ga.gov> with a responsive design for viewing across various desktop and mobile devices (Figure 1). Our team hardened network security, enhanced video broadcasts and continued work on network data continuity and the State Transparency and Regulatory system STARS. The new site and the STARS website went live on July 1, 2019 and included new features to enhance the user experience. During the first six months of the calendar year, the agency received 1,017,333 million page-views on its website. The most popular page-views are the Natural Gas List of Certified Marketers the Natural Gas Market price chart and the File and Case Docket tracking search page.

UTILITIES DIVISION

Since the early 20th century the Georgia Public Service Commission has been responsible for setting the rates charged by telecommunications, natural gas, and electric companies, ensuring the reliability and availability of utility services, and establishing and enforcing quality of service standards. The telecommunications, natural gas, and electric industries are natural monopolies, but some segments of these markets have been opened to retail competition that allow customers to choose among multiple providers for certain services and pay rates set by the provider. Other services, such as distribution of natural gas and electricity by investor-owned companies, remain regulated by the Commission, which sets the rates charged for these services.

The pace of the implementation of competition and deregulation varied among the regulated industries. In the telecommunications industry, long distance service has been competitive since the mid-1980s. In 1995 and 1996, authorities opened local telephone service to competition by federal and state legislation, respectively. Local telephone competition was redefined due to technological advances of broadband, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and wireless telephone. State legislators and federal agencies recognized that local telephone companies face intermodal competition from cable TV companies and wireless providers, not just intermodal competition from other telephone companies.

In 1998, Georgia opened the natural gas commodity market to retail competition. Only one of the two investor-owned natural gas companies elected to open its territory to competition and now sixteen Commission-certified marketers sell gas commodity service to customers in the Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGLC) territory. Marketers set their own prices, but the Commission sets the rates charged by AGLC for distributing the natural gas for the marketers. There are 16 Commission certificated natural gas marketers operating in today's deregulated Georgia market.

During 2019 the Commission continued to monitor the Plant Vogtle nuclear construction project in east Georgia where the Georgia Power Company is building Units 3 and 4. This is the largest construction project in the Southeastern United States and possibly in the United States. It also approved a significant jump in Georgia's renewable energy portfolio and held hearings of base rate cases for both Georgia Power and Atlanta gas Light.

In spite of changes in the regulatory environment, the Commission's mission remains the same: to ensure consumers receive the best possible value in telecommunications, electric and natural gas services, to enforce natural gas pipeline safety laws and to protect utility infrastructure from damage. In the sections that follow are an overview of the role that the Commission has played and the key decisions in each of these utility industries in 2019.

ELECTRIC UNIT

Electricity is an energy form that is vital to the economy of the state and to the quality of life of Georgia's citizens. Of the three utility industries, the electric industry is the most universally utilized and perhaps the most essential. The investor-owned electric utility, Georgia Power Company is fully regulated by the Commission and serves approximately two million consumers. The Commission has limited regulatory authority over the 41 electric membership corporations (EMCs) and 52 municipally-owned electric systems in the state.

SIGNIFICANT MATTERS IN THE PSC's REGULATION OF THE ELECTRIC UTILITY INDUSTRY IN 2019

PSC Reaches Decision on Georgia Power's Base Rates

In 2019, the Commission held proceedings in Georgia Power's 2019 Base Rate Case. In its filing, Georgia Power requested a \$2.2 billion increase over a three-year period 2020-2022. It also requested an increase in the basic service charge from the current \$10 to \$17.95 over the same period. After hearing testimony from many witnesses, the Commission made its decision which provides for no rate increase in 2020 and allows an increase of \$1.77 billion over the three-year period 2020-2022. The basic service charge will not increase in 2020 and will increase just \$2 in 2021 and \$2 in 2022. The average Georgia Power household using 1,000 kilowatt hours per month of electricity can expect to see their monthly bill rise by about \$5.89 per month, according to Georgia Power. This represents a first-year total rate impact of 4 to 4.5%—with a second-year impact of an additional 2 to 2.5% in 2021, and third year impact of a 4.5 to 5% in 2022.

The Commission Staff reviews, analyzes and evaluates the Company's annual Surveillance filings to ensure compliance with Commission orders and to determine whether excess revenues are available for sharing. Under the terms of the agreement in the Company's 2013 Rate Case, an earnings band of 10.95 percent to 12 percent retail ROE was approved. Per the Commission's decision in the 2019 case, 50% of earnings above 12 percent, approximately \$51 million, will be used to provide immediate benefits to customers with the remaining 50% to be refunded to customers.

The Commission's Rate Case Order also provides for more funding for electric vehicle infrastructure, better tariff options for food service customers, lower opt-out metering charges, net metering for up to 5000 customers, recovery of coal ash remediation costs among other items.

Commission Approves Additional Refunds for Georgia Power Customers: *Refunds Will Total \$330 Million from 2018 to 2020*

The Commission also ordered the Company to file with the Commission by February 20, 2018 comments quantifying the effects of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act signed into law by the President on December 22, 2017. The measure lowers the corporate tax cut from 35% to 21% effective January 1, 2018.

Following the Commission Staff's review and recommendation regarding the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act effect on Georgia Power's financials, Commission unanimously approved \$330 million in refunds to Georgia Power's customers over the next three years. The refunds will total approximately \$70 over the three-year period for a residential customer using 1000 kilowatt hours per month.

An additional \$700 million in benefits for Georgia Power customers was held for the Commission to allocate during the Georgia Power base rate case in 2019. These monies are deferred income taxes held as a regulatory liability by the Company. The first of the three refunds was issued in October 2018 and allocated to customers based on their actual base billings for the period January through August 2018. Of the \$185 million refund for 2018, approximately \$131 million was refunded in October. This resulted in a refund of approximately \$27 for a 1,000 kWh residential customer. The second refund will be issued in June 2019 and allocated to customers based on their actual base billings for the period September 2018 through April 2019. Approximately \$54 million of the \$185 million refund for 2018 plus approximately \$42 million of the \$145 million refund for 2019 will be refunded at this time. This will result in a refund of approximately \$20 for a 1,000 kWh residential customer. The third refund will be issued in February 2020 and allocated to customers based on their actual base billings for the period May 2019 through December 2019. Approximately \$103 million of the \$145 million refund for 2019 will be refunded at this time. This will result in a refund of approximately \$22 for a 1,000 kWh residential customer.

The Commission's action brings to more than \$482.6 million in Commission approved refunds and reductions that Georgia Power customers will receive over the next three years as a result of the corporate tax cuts and the reduction in the Nuclear Construction Cost Recovery tariff.

Other Rate programs

In 2016, the Commission approved Georgia Power's implementation of an electric service pre-pay program. Special meters are being installed in residences where there have been several cut-offs for non-payment. This program especially benefits those customers whose electricity service has been disconnected for non-payment in that it eliminates the need for additional deposits to maintain vital electric utility service. In the Commission's decision on Georgia Power's 2019 Rate Case, the Commission approved a Pay By Day tariff to provide customers additional flexibility in payment options and in its decision on Georgia Power's base rates approved a Flat Bill First year tariff which allows new customers to select more stable billing options such as flat bill which typically are not available without 12 months of prior electricity usage history.

Stable Fuel Rates

In 2018, the Commission approved the Company's transaction involving an approximately 20-mile, 30-inch pipeline that connects Plant McDonough with the natural gas pipeline system owned and operated by SNG. The proposed sale of the McDonough Lateral is one piece of a larger transaction in which the Company will be acquiring additional, long-term firm natural gas transportation ("FT") that will enable Plant McDonough to continue to operate reliably into the future.

In December 2015, the Commission unanimously approved a decrease in the Fuel Cost Recovery (FCR) rate for Georgia Power Company customers that will save the average residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt hours about \$5.00 a month for a total reduction of 14

percent on their monthly bill. Under state law Georgia Power's cost of fuel used for electric generation is passed along to customers on a dollar for dollar basis but the Company is not allowed to make a profit on the cost of fuel.

The Company is to file its next Fuel Case in March 2020.

Ongoing investigations

The Commission Staff also continues to investigate and monitor the following:

1. Performance and reliability of the utilities' generating plants, transmission and distribution infrastructure; and,
2. Companies' earnings for excess revenues available for sharing, as defined in the approved accounting orders.
3. Affiliate transactions
4. Electric transportation Initiative
5. Effectiveness of hedging programs of Georgia Power in mitigating potentially high natural gas fuel costs

Commission monitors progress of nuclear plant construction



March 17, 2009, the Commission approved Georgia Power Company's request to certify the construction of the new nuclear power units at its Plant Vogtle Nuclear Power Plant near Waynesboro, Georgia. Under the agreement approved by the Commission, the Company must file semi-annual monitoring and monthly status reports with the Commission. The semi-annual monitoring report includes any proposed revisions to the cost estimate, construction schedule, or project configuration, as well as a report on actual costs incurred during the period covered by the report and an updated comparison of the economics of the certified project.

The Commission Staff and Construction Monitor continue to actively monitor the construction of the two new nuclear units.

Commission Verifies Expenses for Georgia Power's 19th Nuclear Plant Vogtle Construction Monitoring Report

The Commission approved a settlement agreement in Georgia Power's 19th Vogtle Construction Monitoring Report for the reporting period of January 1, 2018 through June 30,

2018. This decision closes out the 19th Semi-annual Vogtle Construction Monitoring (VCM) Report in Docket 29849. The settlement between the Commission's Public Interest Advocacy (PIA) Staff and Georgia Power calls for combining the next two Vogtle Construction Monitoring (VCM) Reports. Georgia Power was originally scheduled to file its next report (VCM 20) at the end of February; however, the Company said the re-baselining of the project cost and schedule was not scheduled to be complete until April 2019. Under the settlement the Company filed a progress report on the re-baselining by May 15, 2019. The Commission Staff and its consultants filed their own assessment of the re-baselining on July 31, 2019. The Company filed a combined VCM 20 and 21 on August 31, 2019.

As part of its decision, the Commission verified and approved \$526.4 million in expenditures by Georgia Power. This decision is not a ruling on whether the expenditures are prudent but only acknowledges that the Company has spent the funds on the project. An additional \$51.6 million which the Company requested be verified and approved in this proceeding was not approved at this time. This money is related to the Company's Westinghouse bankruptcy proceeding. This action does not constitute a disallowance and the Company may file for consideration in a future VCM proceeding along with any evidence or confirmation that the money was actually spent on the project.

The Commission also approved a modification of the Company's allowance for Commission monitoring costs up to \$3.8 million to allow the Commission additional resources to monitor the project in light of the termination of the fixed price contract with Westinghouse and the resulting shift of more cost risk to ratepayers. This is an increase of \$2.1 million over the previous monitoring cost allowance. In addition, this sum will not be charged against or be part of the \$7.3 billion capital construction cost approved in VCM 17.

This additional funding will allow the Commission to better protect ratepayers by hiring additional consultants to independently monitor the Vogtle Construction Project and to more thoroughly analyze the Company's cost and schedule for the project.

In 2017, the Commission approved Georgia Power Company's request to verify and approve \$222 million in expenditures on the Project for the period July 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016 and \$542 million in project expenditures in the for the six-month period ending June 30, 2017. In its Dec. 2017 Order, the Commission determined: (1) that Plant Vogtle Units Three and Four should be completed, (2) the Company will take a portion of the amounts received from the Toshiba Parent Guaranty and credit customers with three \$25 monthly credits to be received no later than the third quarter of 2018, (3) the approved cost forecast will be reduced by the actual amounts of the Toshiba Parent Guaranty applied to the project's construction in progress. This brings the approved revised capital forecast at \$7.3 billion, (4) the Company's return on equity (ROE) used to determine the Nuclear Construction Cost Recovery (NCCR) tariff will be reduced. It will be reduced from 10% to 8.3% on January 1, 2020 and will be further reduced to 5.3% beginning January 1, 2021. Additionally, the Commission authorized Georgia Power to develop a five (5) megawatt community solar facility on Company owned property next to Plant Vogtle.

In 2014, the U.S. Energy Department finalized \$6.5 billion in federal loan guarantees to assist Georgia Power with the construction of the two new Vogtle units. The loan guarantee is projected to save Georgia Power customers about \$250 million.

PSC Reaches Decision on Georgia Power's 2019 IRP

Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §46-3A-2) requires Georgia Power Company to file an updated IRP every three years which details how it will supply the state's electric generation needs. The plan ensures that Georgia Power customers have an adequate and reliable electric supply, establishes measures to conserve energy, and promotes alternate energy supplies.

Georgia Power filed its IRP with the Commission in January 2019. Among other items, the Company had initially recommended adding 1,000 megawatts of renewable energy to the grid, the vast majority in the form of utility-scale solar energy. In an agreement reached with Commission Staff, that amount was increased to 1,650 megawatts. PSC Chairman Lauren "Bubba" McDonald made a motion to increase the renewable/solar energy procurement to 2,210 megawatts, the largest increase in renewable energy in Georgia's history. The 2,210 megawatts will nearly double Georgia's level of renewable energy by the end of 2022. These resources will be procured by an RFP process. The Commission also voted to close operations at certain generating units: Plant Hammond Units 1-4, Plant McIntosh Unit 1, Plant Estatoah Unit 1, Plant Langdale Units 5-6, and Plant Riverview Units 1-2 and approved funding for upgrades at other hydro generating units. As part of the order, Georgia Power is to develop an RFP for capacity resources pending the retirement of more coal units. The Staff will meet with the Company to resolve seasonal planning-winter reserve margin issue, develop an RFP for energy storage pilot projects, monitor the Environmental Compliance Strategy among other matters.

The Commission's 2019 IRP order also provided for more energy efficiency in its modification of GPC's Application for Certification of Its Demand Side Management (DSM) Plan.

PSC Oversight over EMCs and Municipal Electricity Providers

The Commission oversees territorial matters for all electricity suppliers – EMCs, IOU (Georgia Power), municipal electricity providers – pursuant to the Georgia Territorial Electric Service Act, O.C.G.A. § 46-3-1 et seq., by reviewing and authorizing requests for transfers of retail electric service, resolving disputes over service territories and maintaining the electric supplier territorial maps for the 159 Georgia counties. The Commission also approves Georgia Power's and electric membership corporations' requests for financing authority and publishes bi-annual (winter and summer) residential electricity rate comparison for all electricity providers in Georgia.

The Commission Continues Its Involvement in State and Federal Activities That Impact the Electric Utility Industry

The Georgia Public Service Commission continues its involvement in the Southeastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (SEARUC), as well as the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) to learn from other state regulators and share its knowledge for the benefit of Georgia utility consumers. Commissioners and staff serve on the committees of several national and local groups including NARUC, SEARUC, Southeast Electric Reliability Council (SERC), North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), Eastern Interconnection States' Planning Council and the National Council on Electricity Policy.

The Commission's involvement in the EPA's Proposed Clean Power Plan

On June 2, 2014 the U.S. EPA issued its proposed "Clean Power Plan "under Section 111 (d) of the Clean Air Act which would affect existing electric generating units, particularly coal and natural gas-fired generation. Since the rule's release, Georgia Public Service Commissioners voiced their concerns in various forums. In July 2014, Commissioner Wise participated in a workshop on Regional Compliance Options for Section 111 (d) in Washington, D.C sponsored by NARUC and in a September letter to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy, said the EPA's draft rule to reduce carbon emissions from electric power plants, known as the proposed Clean Power Rule, will "place undue hardship on Georgia consumers." Commissioners spoke publicly at the July EPA outreach "Listening" sessions held in Atlanta Georgia, and submitted written comments to EPA on this very important matter. Commissioners and Staff met with Region IV EPA administrators in person and via conference calls to gain clarity and answers regarding the effect the rule may have on Georgia citizens and whether these concerns were properly addressed in the proposed rule. Meetings were also held with State legislators as well as Georgia's Environmental regulators and State Energy officers. In December 2014, the Commission filed its comments on the proposed rule. In 2016, the implementation of the Clean Power Plan was put on hold awaiting a court decision which the Commission continues to monitor.

The proactive decisions of the Georgia Public Service Commission (Commission) over recent years will lessen some of the onerous effects of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Clean Power Plan rule released on August 3, 2015. These decisions have put Georgia ahead of many other states in this process if the state is forced to implement the EPA mandated reductions in carbon emissions.

PSC Continues to Protect Ratepayer Interests by eliminating the collection of the Nuclear Waste Fee

State Senate Resolution 407 was passed in 2017 which urges Georgia's Congressional Delegation to enact legislation to re-establish a Nuclear Waste Program per the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NPWA) of 1982. The resolution will be delivered to Georgia's representatives in the 115th Congress. The Commission unanimously approved a similar resolution in 2017.

DOE's inaction resulted in the need for Georgia Power Company to construct, at ratepayers' expense, additional on-site storage facilities to handle the accumulation of spent nuclear fuel and to engage in activities to construct an interim storage site. The Commission has addressed the DOE's position on this matter at formal hearings and in written documents to emphasize the severity of this situation. In 2012, the Company received a favorable judgment from the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in one of its lawsuits against DOE for not receiving the nuclear waste per its contract in the amount of \$54 million (approximately \$27 million based on Georgia Power's ownership interests. On November 19, 2013, the U.S. Court of Appeals ordered the Department of Energy (DOE) to submit a proposal to Congress to change the Nuclear Waste Disposal fee to zero until DOE can comply with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 or until Congress enacted an alternative waste management plan. In June 2014, the Commission approved Georgia Power Company's request to credit to consumers a portion of the fuel cost that pays into the Nuclear Waste Fund, a move that will save Georgia Power customers about \$31 million a year. The Company submitted the proposal for Commission approval after the Department of Energy formally set the fee it collects under the 1982 federal Nuclear Waste Policy Act to zero effective May 16, 2014.

NATURAL GAS UNIT

Natural Gas Highlights

Natural gas is important to the economic prosperity of Georgia. Approximately 1,600,000 customers in Georgia use natural gas, delivered by the state's two investor-owned natural gas systems, Atlanta Gas Light Company ("AGLC") and Liberty Utilities Georgia Corporation ("Liberty").

At the end of 2019, Georgia had *sixteen (16)* Commission-certified natural gas marketers actively serving firm customers in the AGLC delivery area. During this time, both AGLC and Liberty expanded their service areas and increased their customer base throughout Georgia.

ACTIVITIES IN NATURAL GAS REGULATION IN 2019

Docket No. 42315: Atlanta Gas Light Company 2019 Affiliate Transaction Audit

On February 4, 2019, Staff began an audit of the Atlanta Gas Light Company affiliate transaction allocated costs and methodologies. The audit was performed in support of Staff's review of AGL's 2019 rate case that was filed on June 1, 2019. The audit included two phases: Phase-I and Phase-2. Phase-I focused on the current service agreement between AGL and Southern Company Gas (or AGL Services Company), and reviewed the services provided. This phase also included a review of the processes, methodologies, and costs from Southern Company Gas (or AGL Services Company) allocated to the affiliate companies to include Atlanta Gas Light Company. Additionally, as part of the Phase-I part of the audit, there was a review of costs from Southern Company Services charged to Southern Company Gas and how those charges were allocated to the Southern Company Gas affiliate companies to include Atlanta Gas Light Company.

Phase-II of the audit focused on the final order in Docket No. 39971 Settlement Agreement and the Merger Report filed on March 29, 2019 also under Docket No. 39971. The Affiliate Audit sought to verify if AGLC adhered to Section 2 (a) – (l) of the Settlement Agreement and determined if any calculation of synergy savings was accurate. Additionally, Phase-2 reviewed the components of Section 3 (a) – (h) of the Settlement Agreement and determined the accuracy of the information in the Merger Report. The Affiliate Audit reviewed the accuracy of any remaining information provided in the Merger Report and its consistency with the Settlement Agreement.

On September 20, 2019, Staff filed its affiliate transaction audit report as Exhibit 18 as part of its direct testimony in AGL's 2019 rate case.

Docket No. 42315: Atlanta Gas Light Company Rate Case

On June 3, 2019, AGLC filed its 2019 rate case seeking to have its rates increased. AGLC included sixteen sets of direct testimony. AGLC requested the following rate component changes:

\$96.3 million rate increase
Return on Equity ("ROE") of 10.75%,
Equity of 55%,
Long-Term Debt of 39%
Short-Term Debt of 6%
Cost of Long-Term Debt of 4.74%
Cost of Short-Term Debt of 3.99%

On September 10th and 11th, the Commission held hearings on AGLC's direct testimony.

On September 20, 2019, the Public Interest Advocacy Staff ("PIAS") filed its direct testimony to provide an independent assessment of AGLC's rate case. The PIAS had four (4) sets of witness testimony. In preparation for the direct testimony, the PIAS issued 23 sets of data requests and reviewed hundreds of documents and spreadsheets provided by AGLC. The PIAS had the following adjustments to AGLC's request:

\$42 million rate decrease
Return on Equity ("ROE") of 9.0%,
Equity of 51%,
Long-Term Debt of 44.2%
Short-Term Debt of 4.8%
Cost of Long-Term Debt of 4.62%
Cost of Short-Term Debt of 2.53%

On October 23rd and 24th, the Commission held hearings on PIAS direct testimony.

On November 6, 2019, AGL filed its sixteen (16) sets of rebuttal testimony regarding the PIAS direct testimony with the following request:

\$90.3 million rate increase
Return on Equity ("ROE") of 10.75%,
Equity of 55%,
Long-Term Debt of 40.21%
Short-Term Debt of 4.79%
Cost of Long-Term Debt of 4.74%
Cost of Short-Term Debt of 2.51%

During the December 19, 2019 Administrative Session, the Commission, in part, approved the following regarding AGLC’s rate case:

\$65.3 million rate increase
 Return on Equity (“ROE”) of 10.25%,
 Equity of 56%,
 Long-Term Debt of 39.21%
 Short-Term Debt of 4.79%
 Cost of Long-Term Debt of 4.74%
 Cost of Short-Term Debt of 2.51%

In addition, the Commission adopted PIA’s proposed depreciation rate.

Universal Service Fund (“USF” or “Fund”)

Commission Rule 515-7-5-.02 states that, consistent with O.C.G.A. §46-4-161, the Commission is authorized to create and establish regulations to administer a universal service fund for each gas company that elects to become subject to the provisions of Article 5 of Chapter 4 of Title 46 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, and which satisfies the requirements of O.C.G.A. §46-4-154. With respect to each such gas company, which is also termed an "electing distribution company" (“EDC”) under the Natural Gas Competition and Deregulation Act, the Commission is charged with making a determination prior to the commencement of the EDC’s fiscal year as to the amount of funding that is appropriate for that year. Commission Rule 515-7-5-.03 states that, a universal service fund shall be created for each EDC for the purposes set forth in O.C.G.A. §46-4-161(a). These purposes include assuring that gas is available for sale by marketers to firm retail customers within a territory certificated to each marketer; enabling the EDC to extend and expand its facilities and service in the public interest; assisting low-income residential consumers in times of emergency as determined by the Commission; and consumers of the Regulated Provider of natural gas in accordance with Code Section 46-4-166. Commission Rule 515-7-5-.07 outlines procedures related to applications for disbursement from the Universal Service Fund for an EDC. The Commission administers the USF to include the review and final decision on all disbursement requests.

As a routine matter, Staff reconciles the monthly bank statements, provides monthly reporting, reviews requests for USF funding, and provides annual reporting to the State Accounting Office (“SAO”). As seen in the tables below, the USF had a beginning balance of \$32,324,122 on January 1, 2019. During the year, the USF had deposits totaling \$9,706,435 and Expenditures totaling \$14,209,547. The ending December 31, 2019 balance was \$27,821,010.

USF Activity: Year 2019

2019 USF Beginning Balance	\$32,324,122
Deposits	\$9,706,435
Expenditures	(\$14,209,547)
2019 Ending Balance	\$27,821,010

The Commission approved the USF for AGLC in 1998. From December 1, 1998 through December 31, 2019, the USF had deposits in the amount of \$335,492,974 and expenditures in the amount of \$307,671,964 to arrive at the ending December 2019 balance of \$27,821,010.

**USF Historic Activity:
1998- 2019**

Deposits	\$335,492,974
Expenditures	\$307,671,964
2019 Ending Balance	\$27,821,010

Annually, Staff provides reporting to the State Accounting Office (“SAO”) on the activity and position of the Fund. On July 24, 2019, Staff emailed the following completed forms to the SAO for fiscal year 2019.

USF FY 2019 SAO Reporting File List

-  1. USF FY 2019 Form 470 Trial Balance Shell
-  2. USF FY 2019 Investments Form
-  3. FY 2019 USF Custodial Credit Risk Form
-  4. USF FY 2019 Form 470 Flux Analysis
-  5. USF June 2019 Escrow Account Bank Statement

Docket No. 42115: Atlanta Gas Light Company’s 2019 Universal Service Fund (“USF”) Facility Expansion Plans

On September 4 2018, Atlanta Gas Light Company (“AGLC”) filed its Year 2019 Universal Service Fund Facilities Expansion Plan (“2019 Plan”). The petition proposed three (3) line-extension projects that included the Toombs County Project, the Floyd County Project, and the Tattnall County Project. As part of the filing, Staff reviewed AGLC’s seven (7) minimum filing requirements (“MFR”). Staff reviewed AGLC’s 5% budget cap and found it to be \$16.9 million. Staff reviewed the available USF funds. Although the ending December 2018 USF balance was \$32.3 million, the USF had encumbrances totaling \$14.1 million. The USF unencumbered balance available for USF projects was \$18.2 million. Per Statute, AGLC cannot receive USF funding beyond its 5% budget cap. During the January 15, 2019 Administrative Session, the Commission approved the Toombs County Project with an estimated USF disbursement of \$4.6 million. Additionally, the Commission approved the Floyd County Project with a USF disbursement of \$10.7 million. The Tattnall County Project was postponed due to the constraints to AGLC’s 5% capital budget cap.

Docket No. 34734 Liberty Utilities Corporation (Liberty) (Peach State Natural Gas) 2019 Georgia Rate Adjustment Mechanism (“2019 GRAM”)

On December 27, 2011, the Commission approved the Final Order Adopting the Stipulation (“GRAM Stipulation”) between the Staff and Atmos Energy for an alternative form of ratemaking in accordance with O.C.G.A. 46-2-23.1. The process is called the Georgia Rate Adjustment Mechanism (“GRAM”). On April 1, 2013 in Docket No. 36278, the Commission approved the Liberty Utilities Corporation purchase of the Atmos Energy assets in Georgia, and Liberty assumed the GRAM ratemaking process. The GRAM Stipulation was updated in May 2016.

On October 17, 2018, Liberty filed its 2019 GRAM Filing (“Original 2019 GRAM”). The filing consisted of the following.

- Schedule-1: Calculation of Revenue Deficiency
- Schedule-2: Average Rate Base: with supporting workpapers
- Schedule-3: Income Statement
- Schedule-4: Operating Revenues: with supporting workpapers
- Schedule-5: Operating Expense Summary: with supporting workpapers
- Schedule-6: Depreciation Expense: with supporting workpapers
- Schedule-7: Taxes and Other Income: with supporting workpapers
- Schedule-8: Calculation of Federal and State Income Taxes
- Schedule-9: Derivation of the Income Expansion Factor
- Schedule-10: Capital Structure and Cost of Capital
- Schedule-11: Calculation of Adjustment

The Excel model contained eleven (11) schedules and forty-eight (48) supporting worksheets. With an ending June 30, 2018 customer count of 54,553, Liberty requested a base rate increase of \$749,753 after ratemaking adjustments. Staff reviewed the model and found it to be whole and complete with the required twenty (20) day deadline. As Staff analyzed the rate requested, it developed an issues list.

During January 2019, Staff and Liberty held a meeting to resolve issues associated with the 2019 GRAM and determined that the appropriate path to resolution was for Liberty to file a 2020 rate case filing. Therefore, Staff and Liberty drafted a joint stipulation that included a revised 2019 GRAM and a 2020 rate case filing. The joint stipulation provided for a revised 2019 Annual GRAM Filing containing the following adjustments:

1. The total authorized revenue per WP 4-3 is \$33,710,589 including the effect of the EDIT amortization credit.
2. The Schedule 3 revenue requirement includes a 10.5% ROE on the equity portion of the total rate base of \$108,472,089 set forth on Schedule 2.
3. As provided in the approved May 6, 2016 GRAM Stipulation, the 10.5% ROE is at the bottom end of the authorized ROE band defined in the GRAM Stipulation.
4. The Schedule 2 Operating Income Attributed to Equity (“OIAE”) amount (at current rates) is \$5,431,472.
5. The Schedule 2 OIAE amount contains \$488,000 for Liberty’s customer growth and retention program.
6. The Schedule 2 Rate of Return on Common Equity is 9.10% at current rates.
7. The Schedule 11 Operating Income Deficiency (or Sufficiency) is \$832,792 based on the difference between 10.5% minus the 9.10% ROE before gross up.
8. The Schedule 11 Excess Deferred Income Tax (“EDIT”) credit applied is (\$193,730) before gross up.
9. The Schedule 11 Operating Income Deficiency with the EDIT credit is \$639,061 before gross up.
10. The Schedule 11 Rate Adjustment After Income Tax Gross Up is \$860,573 before considering the RTU carrying costs.

11. The Schedule 11 2017 RTU credit is (\$323,134) of which (\$215,423) will be reflected in rates for the period February 1, 2019 to January 31, 2020.
12. The Schedule 11 RTU carrying cost is (\$20,476) of which (\$13,651) will be reflected in rates for the period February 1, 2019 to January 31, 2020.
13. The Schedule 11 total 2019 GRAM Rate Adjustment to be collected in the period February 1, 2019 to January 31, 2020 is \$624,674.

Additionally, the joint stipulation provided that the PRP surcharge would remain in place until the next rate case. Staff and Liberty agreed that the Company would file a traditional rate case no earlier than January 1, 2020 and no later than April 1, 2020 with proposed rates to be effective no less than thirty days (30) after the filing date that utilizes the twelve-month period beginning on the proposed effective date. As part of such filing, in addition to its supporting testimony, Liberty shall file a Class Cost of Service Study in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 46-2-26.4 in the form of one comprehensive Excel revenue requirement model (“RRM”). On January 31, 2019, the Commission approved the order that adopted the Joint Stipulation.

In addition to the GRAM ratemaking process, Liberty files quarterly financial statements, customer numbers, capital budget data, and affiliate transaction data. Staff provides its own analysis on this data to evaluate the ongoing financial capability of the Utility. During 2019, Staff reviewed these filings as part of the ratemaking assessment of the Utility.

Docket No. 40828: Atlanta Gas Light Company (“AGLC”) Georgia Rate Adjustment Mechanism (“GRAM”)

Under O.C.G.A. 46-2-23.1, AGLC had a GRAM mechanism that was suspended in May 2018 with the agreement that AGLC filed a rate case on June 1, 2019. Although the GRAM was suspended, AGLC continued to file quarterly financial reporting in the form of financial statements, customer numbers, and affiliate transaction data. Staff continued to review this information on an ongoing basis, and the analysis supported Staff’s review of AGLC’s rate case filing in Docket No. 42315.

Docket No. 42316 2019-2020 Liberty Utilities Gas Supply Plan

On September 26, 2019, the Commission approved Liberty’s 2019-2020 Gas Supply Plan in Docket 42316. The plan identified the interstate storage and peaking assets needed to meet the company’s forecasted peak demand for its approximately 54,300 customers in the Gainesville and Columbus service areas. The 2019-2020 Gas Supply Plan included the methodology used to forecast peak day design, the appropriate capacity reserve margin and the associated turn back of capacity. This Gas Supply Plan is in effect until September 30, 2020. The Company will file the next Gas Supply Plan by July 1, 2020.

Active Natural Gas Marketer Update

At the end of December 2019, there were sixteen (16) certified natural gas marketers and one (1) Regulated Provider on Atlanta Gas Light Company’s distribution system. (See Table-1 below).

Just Energy sold all of its customer accounts to Infinite Energy during the month of November and the Commission approved a customer transfer order on December 12, 2019. Infinite began serving their new customers on January 1, 2020. Just Energy maintains its marketer certificate but will not market or serve customers until June 1, 2020, as part of a stay out agreement between the companies and Staff.

Table-1: Georgia Deregulated Marketers	Docket #	Marketer	Certificate Date
1	9474	Infinite	5/17/1999
2	9536	SCANA	10/6/1998
3	9574	GNG	10/6/1998
4	15727	Walton	10/18/2002
5	15969	TRUE	11/26/2002
6	20504	Commerce	7/12/2005
7	21109	Gas South	1/3/2006
8	24849	Stream Georgia	4/3/2008
9	25425	Constellation	4/25/2018
10	25471	Fireside	10/19/2007
11	35857	United Energy Trading	9/20/2012
12	36550	North American Power	4/23/2013
13	37369	Colonial	5/6/2014
14	37735	Mansfield	3/7/2014
15	40797	XOOM	3/23/2017
16	41840	Thermo Choice	8/2/2018

As part of O.C.G.A. § 46-4-153(f) and Commission Rule 515-7-3-.07(10) natural gas marketers file information at the Commission for an ongoing review of financial and technical capability. The marketers provide financial information that Staff utilizes to conduct monthly, quarterly, and annual analyses. The ultimate goal of examining the financial statements is to identify financial trends over a period of time for each particular natural gas marketer; and to monitor each company's financial viability. Staff communicates any identified discrepancies to the natural gas marketers for resolution .

Docket No. 41533 Regulated Provider

On June 21, 2019, the Commission approved a third year extension for Scana to serve as the Regulated Provider. This extended the term to August 31, 2021.

As of December 31, 2019, the Regulated Provider (SCANA) had a total of 36,363 customers, approximately 4,404 more than December 31, 2018. Of these customers, 14,168 were designated as Group 1 and 22,195 were designated as Group 2. The Department of Human Resources (DHR) uses the same guidelines to qualify Group 1 customers as those established for the Federal Low-Income Housing Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Group 2 customers are those who cannot obtain service from other marketers due to poor credit or no credit. During 2019, the Commission approved approximately \$835,905 for Group 1 customer

assistance to be used to help with customers' monthly bills. No such funds are available for Group 2 customers.

Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity

The Commission's Natural Gas Unit and Facilities Protection Unit continue to work jointly on the County-Wide Natural Gas Safety Plans (CWSP) (Commission Rule 515-9-7-.01) to ensure that the plans possess safety-based boundaries that conform to the corresponding Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity which govern where natural gas providers may install their facilities. In counties where multiple natural gas providers serve, the providers must develop a CWSP delineating safety and emergency response procedures for use during natural gas emergencies and be qualified to operate natural gas distribution systems. In addition, where necessary, either new certificates are granted or existing certificates are amended (Commission Rule 515-7-1, *et seq.*) to natural gas operators. Commission staff periodically engaged with the stakeholders as necessary. By the close of 2019, the Commission amended three (3) of the previously approved one hundred five (105) Certificates affected the by the CWSPs. The Certificates and CWSPs are revised and updated as natural gas providers continue to develop and maintain their facilities and address their boundaries in order to meet the needs of their systems.

Docket No. 4167 Audit of AGLC's Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP)

In 1992 Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGLC) requested an Environmental Response Cost Recovery Rider as a mechanism for recovering costs associated with the cleanup of MGP sites, three (3) of which are in Florida. After holding hearings, the Commission adopted a settlement. Commencing in 1992, the Commission has conducted audits of capital expenditures related to the cleanup of twelve (12) MGP sites where AGLC used to manufacture natural gas from coal. The production process created by-products that contaminated the soil and groundwater.

AGLC ratepayers pay a surcharge to assist with the costs associated with this cleanup. The Commission Staff audits the expenditures for accuracy and financial prudence. The program fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30, and Staff files an audit report for costs for each fiscal year. During the 2019 fiscal year, the Staff submitted audit report of the costs associated with Year 27. All costs that were audited were found to be prudent. The 2018 rider amount is \$1.60 per Dth per DDDC per year. Since the inception of the MGP program, the total amounts allocated to be recoverable expenses are \$277,461,009.21. To date, the ratepayers have paid \$264,252,842.99 in recovery costs for the MGP cleanup.

Docket 42317 Atlanta Gas Light Company's Petition to Amend Its 2019-2022 Capacity Supply Plan:

On July 1, 2019, Atlanta Gas Light Company ("AGLC") filed its Petition for Approval of the 2019-2022 Capacity Supply Plan pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 46-4-155(e) *et seq.* which provides that at least every third year following the date when the rates for commodity sales service within a delivery group(s) become no longer subject to Commission approval nor to the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 46-2-26.5, AGLC shall file on or before August 1 of such year, a capacity plan that designates the array of available interstate capacity assets selected by AGLC for the purpose of making gas available on its system for firm distribution service to retail customers in such delivery group(s). In addition, the Commission has a Rule, 515-7-11-.04, specifying the Minimum Filing Requirements to be filed as a part of the Capacity Supply Plan.

On March 26, 2019, the Commission issued its Procedural and Scheduling Order setting forth the dates for filing of testimony and briefs, as well as the dates for hearings in this matter.

On September 13, 2019, a Joint Stipulation addressing the issues had been executed on behalf of the Company, Commission Staff, and the natural gas marketers was filed. Some of the issues addressed included: the design day requirements, the reserve margin of 5%, Tariff modifications, the use and management of interstate capacity assets, and other provisions that were carried over from the previously approved Capacity Supply Plan.

A hearing was held on this matter on September 17, 2019.

On September 26, 2019, the Commission voted on the Final Order at a Special Administrative Session which approved the Capacity Supply Plan.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNIT

The telecommunications industry is indispensable to the economy of the state. Over the past 20 plus years, the Georgia's Telecommunications and Competition Development Act of 1995 and the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 have had a great impact on the Commission's role in this vital industry. The primary goal of these statutes was to replace traditional regulated monopoly service with a competitive market. For competitive segments of the industry, the Commission does not set rates, but facilitates market development, certifies providers, arbitrates interconnection agreements, and resolves complaints among competitors.

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY IN 2018

In 2019 the Commission granted certificates of authority to nine competitive local exchange providers, three inter-exchange service providers, three long-distance resellers, and one institutional telecommunication service provider. The total number of active certificates in 2019 was 873, distributed among industry segments, as follows: 219 resellers, 41 alternative operator service providers, 230 competitive local exchange providers, 80 inter-exchange service providers, 245 payphone service providers, 23 institutional telecommunication service providers and over 35 incumbent local exchange service providers.

On December 13 and 14, 2018, 19 Tier II Independent Local Exchange Carriers (ILECs) filed requests for an aggregate disbursement of \$30,309,022 for the 24th UAF year covering the period July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018. All applicants were audited by Hurlbert CPA, LLC. Under a Commission-approved process, an ILEC applicant can choose to have its application considered on one of two "tracks." Under Track 1, the applicant voluntarily limits its request to no more than \$1,000,000 in a streamlined process that does not ordinarily require a hearing. Under Track 2, the applicant can request a disbursement exceeding \$1,000,000 but would undergo a mandatory hearing during which any party could raise concerns regarding any aspect of the application.

In 2019 the Commission approved total disbursements for the 24th UAF year of \$30,263,980. The approved disbursements are listed below.

24th UAF Year (7/1/2017-6/30/2018)

Company	Approved Disbursement
Alma Telephone Company	\$609,446.00
Blue Ridge Telephone Company	\$2,717,261.00
Brantley Telephone Company, Inc.	\$1,634,775.00
Bulloch Telephone Cooperative	\$1,863,400.00
Camden Telephone & Telegraph Co., Inc.	\$1,841,901.00
Chickamauga Telephone Corporation	\$668,225.00
Darien Telephone Co., Inc.	\$2,022,556.00
Glenwood Telephone Company	\$509,637.00
Hart Telephone Company	\$214,043.00

Nelson-Ball Ground Telephone Company	\$1,349,266.00
Pembroke Telephone Company, Inc.	\$1,171,693.00
Pineland Telephone Cooperative, Inc.	\$1,125,695.00
Plant Telephone Company	\$675,250.00
Planters Rural Telephone Cooperative	\$2,371,783.00
Progressive Rural Telephone Co-op., Inc.	\$2,484,802.00
Public Service Telephone Company	\$3,347,882.00
Ringgold Telephone Company	\$3,064,606.00
Trenton Telephone Company	\$2,240,598.00
Waverly Hall Telephone, LLC	\$351,161.00
	\$ 30,263,980.00

House Bill 168, which took effect on June 4, 2010, phased out intrastate access charges and allowed the lost revenue to be offset by higher basic service rates. Pursuant to the statute, the Commission first determined a benchmark local service rate by calculating 110% of the July 1, 2009 residential statewide average rate for basic local exchange service. Next, the Commission set a schedule by which local rates would be increased to the benchmark rate. The approved schedule required basic local exchange service rates to increase by an amount not to exceed \$1.61 per month per year for a period of nine years with a true-up in the tenth year. For 2020, the statewide benchmark was increased to \$21.51, after adjusting for inflation.

Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS)

Hamilton Telecommunications has been the Georgia TRS provider since April 2006. Headquartered in Nebraska, Hamilton currently provides relay service in 17 states. Hamilton, known here as Georgia Relay, operates a call center in Albany, Georgia, seven days a week, 18 hours a day, employing over 180 communications assistants. In 2019, the Relay Center in Albany processed an average of almost 50,000 relay calls per month. The total cost paid from the TRS fund was \$629,343 for 2019. The TRS portion was \$187,516.

With Commission approval, Hamilton implemented Captioned Telephone Service (CapTel®) in Georgia in January 2008. An enhanced form of relay service, CapTel® allows individuals with hearing loss to view word-for-word captions of their telephone conversations. Over 1,300 subscribers now use the system, averaging approximately 30,000 calls a month. The cost of this service for 2019 was \$441,827.

Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP)

The Commission established the Georgia TEDP in March 2003 pursuant to the provisions of House Bill 1003. This program provides specialized telecommunications equipment to Georgians who, because of physical impairments (particularly hearing and speech), cannot otherwise communicate over the telephone. Receipt of free equipment under this program is subject to medical and financial eligibility requirements. To date, approximately 8,571 equipment items, which includes approximately 1,100 CapTel® phones, have been distributed to hearing or speech-impaired applicants. The Commission contracts with the Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired (GACHI) to be the distribution agency for the Georgia TEDP. The cost of this service for 2019 was \$797,566.

Audible Universal Information Access Service (AUIAS)

In 2006 the Legislature created a statewide AUIAS to provide blind and print-disabled citizens of Georgia with telephonic access to print media publications. The law gave the Commission oversight of the service. Following a competitive bidding process, the Commission selected the National Federation of the Blind to administer the service. Since June 2006, the AUIAS has provided continuous audible universal access to all Georgia telephone exchanges, 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 52 weeks a year. The system is accessible by dialing a toll-free or local number anywhere in the state and has the capacity to serve an unlimited number of subscribers. Currently, there are over 2,900 subscribers to this service. The total number of Georgia citizens that could potentially benefit from this service exceeds 25,000, as demonstrated by the number of current subscribers to the Georgia Library for Accessible Services. The cost of this service in 2019 was \$214,948.

Hearing Aid Distribution Program

In August 2007, the Commission approved the Hearing Aid Distribution Program according to the provisions of House Bill 655, which authorized use of TRS funds for the distribution of hearing aids. The Commission contracted with the Georgia Lions Lighthouse Foundation, a nonprofit organization that has provided hearing aids to low-income Georgians for over 30 years. Under the current contract, the Foundation receives \$747,516 each year and \$3,497 for each child under the age of 20 who qualifies for this program. The Foundation partners with two hearing aid manufacturers and maintains a network of over 180 audiologists throughout the state. The program distributed 1,668 hearing aids to 860 applicants in 2019.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS UNIT

The Consumer Affairs Unit is the primary contact for consumers that want to make their concerns and issues known to the Commission. Consumers convey these concerns and issues in the form of complaints, inquiries, or opinions, collectively referred to as “contacts.” Consumers file contacts and opinions in person, via telephone, fax, regular mail, email, and internet.

The Consumer Affairs Staff interacts with representatives from the utility industries to resolve consumer complaints, discuss complaint trends and possible courses of action to address problematic trends, and ensure mutual understanding of respective business processes and policies.

Consumer Affairs Staff has direct involvement with both the general public and industry representatives. This direct involvement gives the Consumer Affairs Unit a unique perspective that makes it a source of valuable information for other work groups within the Commission. In addition to complaint resolution, the Consumer Affairs Unit is responsible for consumer education and community outreach.

Consumer Affairs Community Outreach

In 2019 the Consumer Affairs Unit continued our Outreach activities by giving presentations to community groups and organizations. Consumer Affairs Staff was able to attend the annual H.E.A.T (Heating Energy Assistance Team, Inc.) meeting. Consumer Affairs staff also participated in the Senior Wellness and Resource fair hosted by the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA), in conjunction with Quality Living Services (QLS). Our office participated in a community outreach program sponsored by the Georgia Council on Aging. Consumer Affairs Unit also gave a presentation to MDC Healthcare an organization that services 600-700 patients per day and have about 500 caregivers on staff.

The Consumer Affairs Unit will continue our efforts to increase public awareness of the mission of the Georgia Public Service Commission.

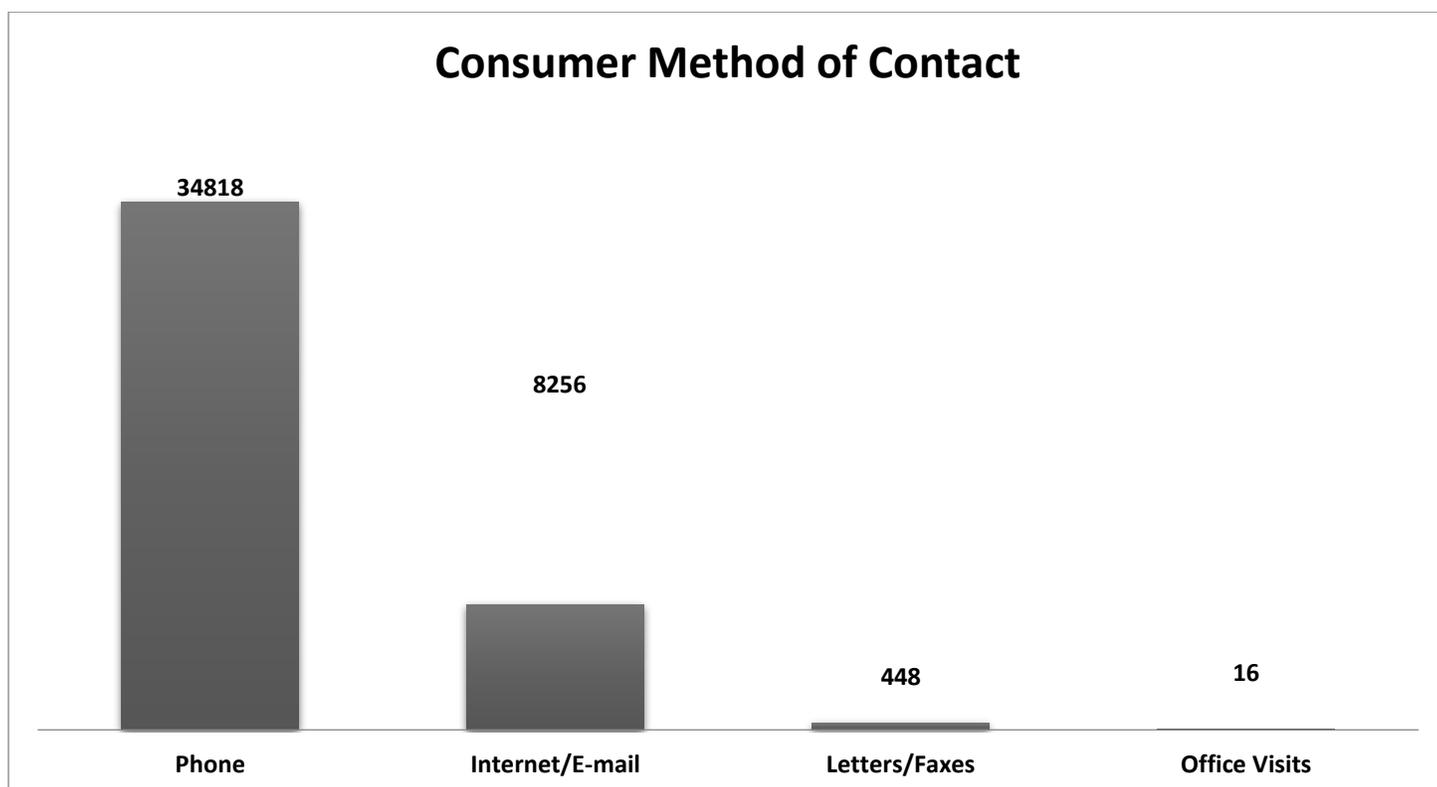
Inbound Contacts

The main method that consumers use to contact the Commission is by telephone. The Consumer Affairs Unit has a total of six (6) staff members that answer all calls coming through our Automated Call Distribution (ACD) system. Incoming Spanish calls are routed to bilingual staff members (one member is located in the Consumer Affairs Unit) for assistance. The total number of calls reported by the Commission’s Automated Call Distributor (ACD) for 2019 was 34,818 (this includes Spanish calls).

Telephone calls comprised the majority of all inbound contact methods to the Consumer Affairs Unit in 2019. Internet/E-mail contacts continued to be the second preferred method of contacting the Commission in 2019 with a total of 8,256 contacts.

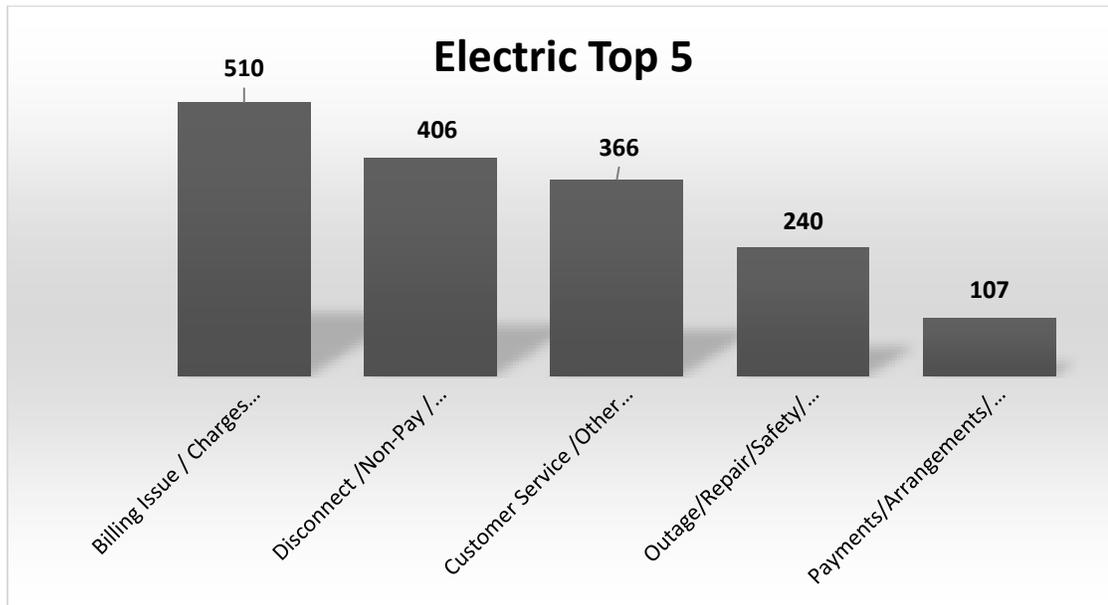
Regular mail and faxes were also methods consumers used for communicating with the Commission. The total paper correspondence in 2019 (letters and faxes) was 448. The Office of Consumer Affairs also takes complaints from consumers that visit the Georgia Public Service Commission in person. In 2019 the Office of Consumer Affairs met with approximately 16 consumers to discuss issues with their bills, deposits, and to share information on energy assistance and Lifeline. In all, Consumer Affairs representatives received 43,538 inquiries, complaints, and opinions from the general public in 2019.

Some of the contacts received from consumers will require referral or follow-up by a Consumer Affairs staff member. Contacts requiring referral or follow-up are recorded in the Consumer Response System (CRS) database. Referrals are the contacts that our staff send via e-mail to the utility company for a response. Follow-Ups include making calls or sending e-mails to the representatives of the utility as well as contacts to and from consumers.



Electric Consumer Issues

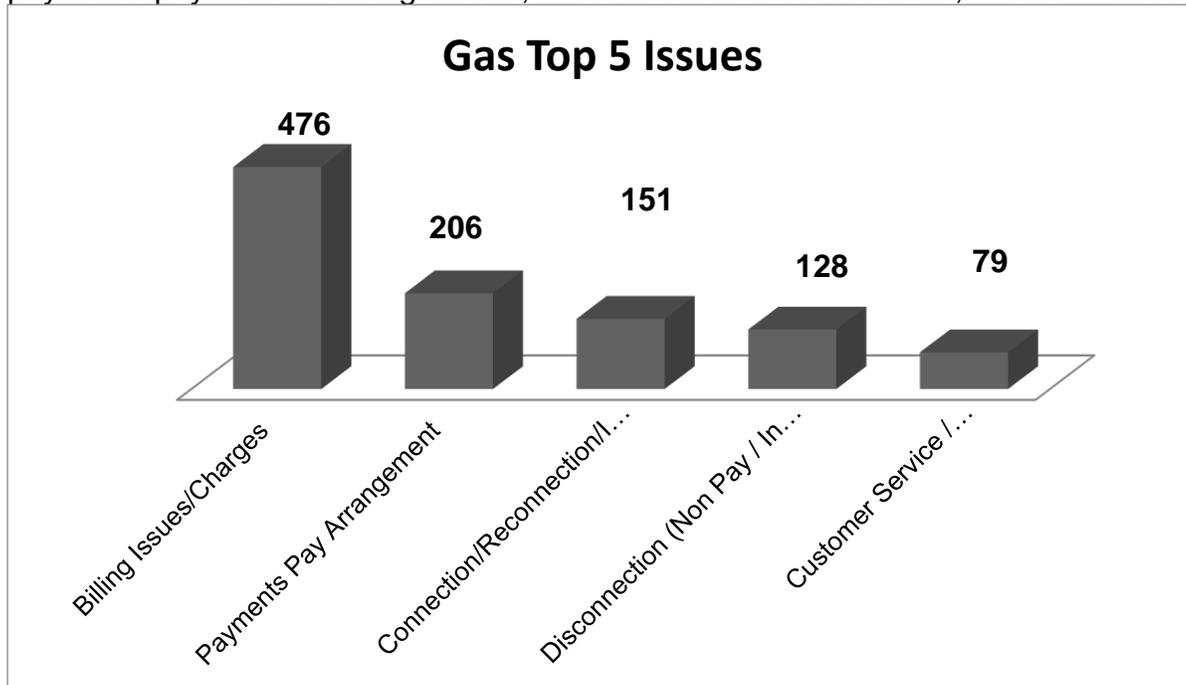
Electric contacts decreased from 1,715 in 2018 to 1629 in 2019.



Natural Gas Consumer Issues

Natural Gas contacts decreased from 1040 in 2018 to 872 contacts in 2019.

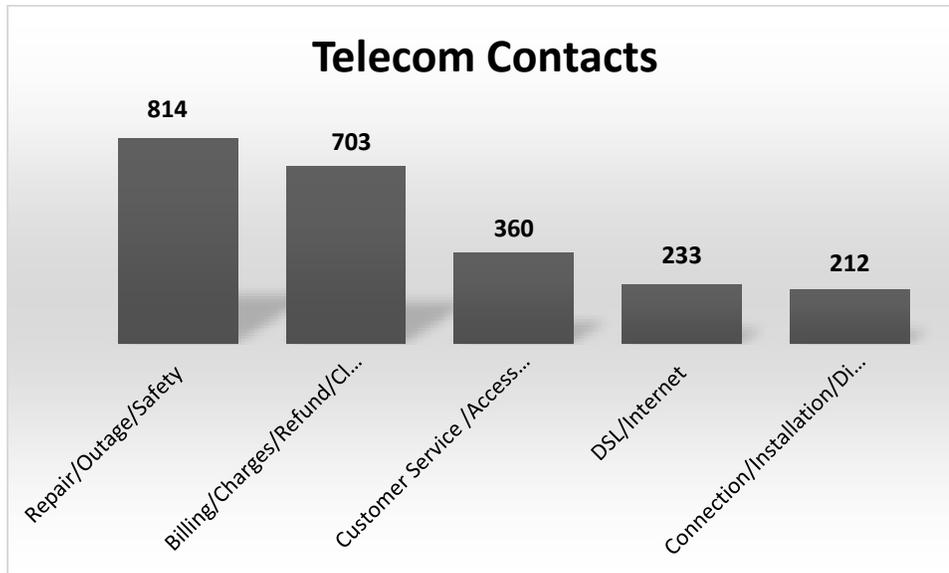
The major Natural Gas issues for 2019 were calls concerning billing issues/charges, payments/payment arrangements, connections/reconnections, and disconnections.



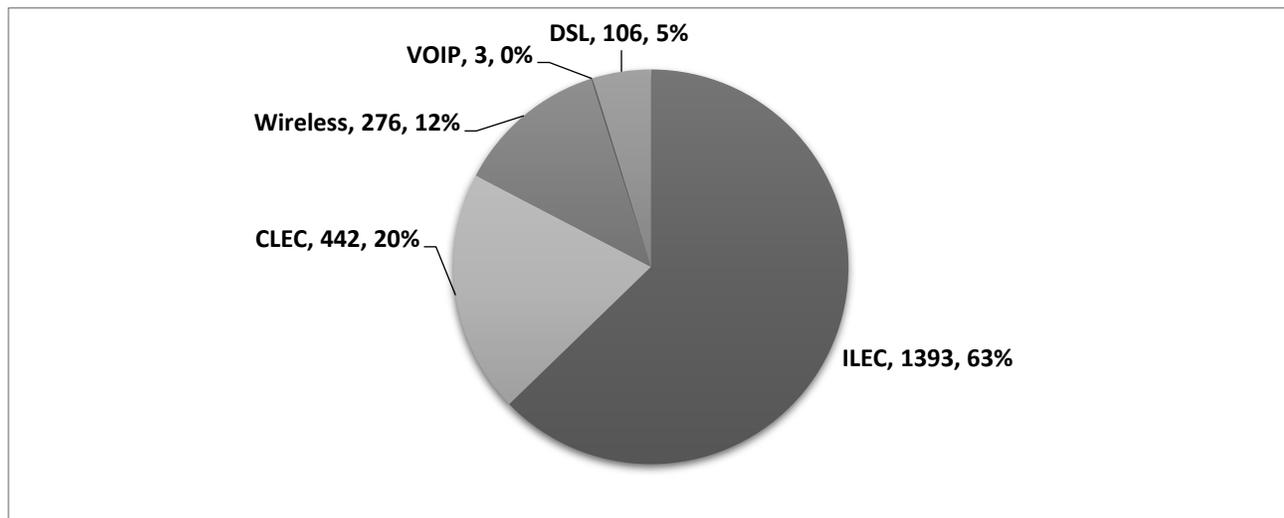
Telecommunications Consumer Issues

Telecommunications contacts decreased from 2709 in 2018 to 2320 contacts in 2019. There were 998 CLEC (Competitive Local Exchange Carrier) complaints, 3076 ILEC (Independent Local Exchange Carrier) complaints, 558 wireless complaints, 188 DSL complaints, and 4 ITS complaints for 2019.

The major telecom issues for 2019 were calls concerning repair/outage, customer service and billing. The main complaints from consumers were repairs and safety issues. Most of these concerns related to outages from inclement weather.

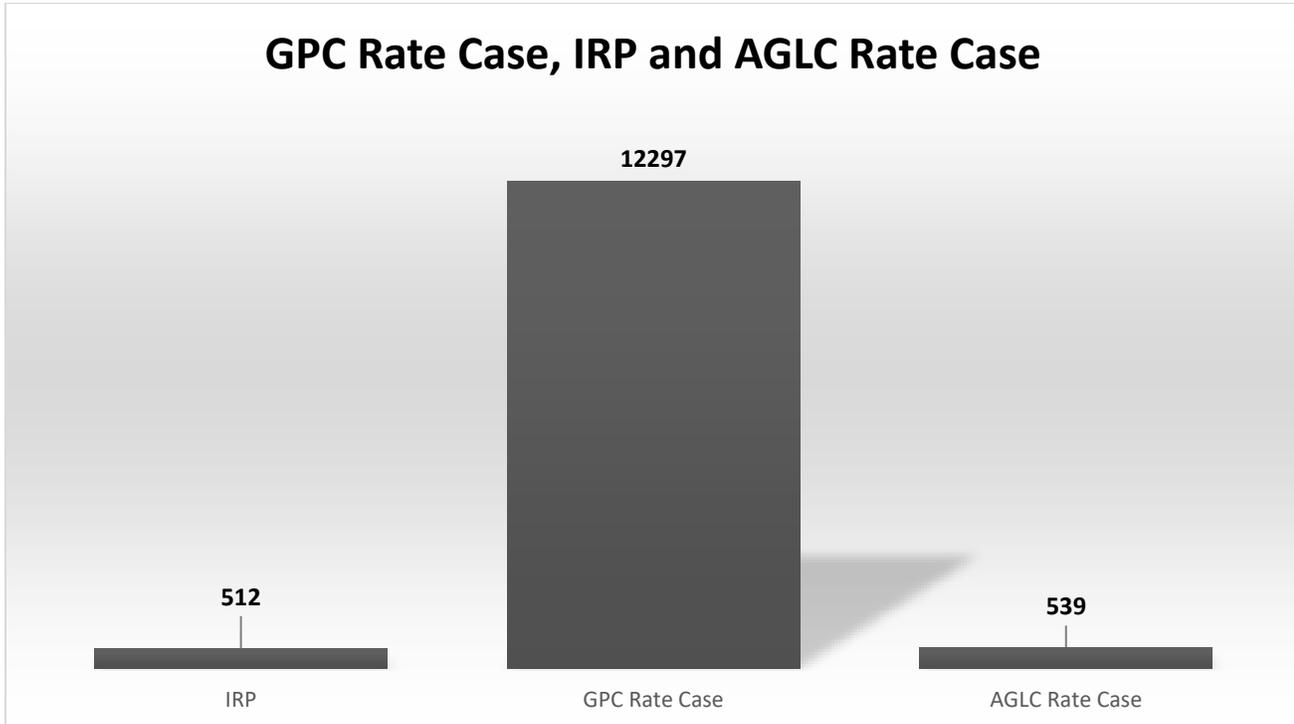


In 2019 Independent Local Exchange Carriers (ILEC) and Competitive Local Exchanges Carrier (CLEC) contacts made up the largest number of the telecommunications calls to the Consumer Affairs Unit.



Georgia Power Company Integrated Rate Plan and Rate Case and Atlanta Gas Light Company Rate Case

There were approximately 13,350 calls, letters, faxes, e-mails, internet comments, opinions on the Georgia Power Company Integrated Rate Plan (IRP) and Rate Case and Atlanta Gas Light Company Rate Case.



INTERNAL CONSULTANTS UNIT

The Internal Consultants Unit of the Utilities Division provided expertise to the Electric, Natural Gas and Telecommunications Units. During 2019, Internal Consultants served on several major cases which included the Plant Vogtle Units 3 and 4 Construction Monitoring, Docket No. 29849; the Georgia Power Company 2019 IRP, Docket No. 42310; the Georgia Power Company 2019 Demand-Side Management Plan, Docket No. 42311; the Georgia Power Company 2019 Rate Case, Docket No. 42516; and, the Atlanta Gas Light Company 2019 Rate Case, Docket No. 42315. IC Staff provided expert testimony as part of the Public Interest Advocacy Staff for all of these dockets and served as Commissioner Advisory Staff as well.

Throughout 2019, the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (“EERE”) Group were members of the Public Interest Advocacy Staff for Georgia Power’s 2019 Integrated Resource Plan (“IRP”) and DSM Certification filings which were filed on January 31, 2019, and Georgia Power’s 2019 Rate Case which was filed on June 28, 2019. The final IRP agreement adopted procurement goals of 2,000 megawatts (“MW”) of Utility Scale renewable resources, 210 MW of Distributed Generation (“DG”) resources, and 50 MW of new biomass generation. The Final Order also included a 15% increase in Energy Efficiency kWh savings, six Residential Demand Side Management (DSM) programs, and five Commercial DSM programs. During the Rate Case, EERE Staff reviewed the renewable and DSM related portions of Georgia Power’s 2019 Rate Case, prepared cross-examination, and testified in the proceedings.

In response to specific issues raised in EERE Staff’s testimony during the IRP, Georgia Power continued to work with EERE Staff to address aspects of Georgia Power’s Renewable Cost Benefit Framework (“RCB Framework”) which is used in the valuation of all Renewable resources including the value calculated for behind the meter rooftop solar. In particular, EERE Staff pointed out inconsistencies between Utility Scale and DG profiles, improvements to the calculation of the Generation Remix, Support Capacity, and Deferred Generation Capacity components, and that solar plus storage projects be considered their own technology in regard to the RCB Framework. During 2019, EERE Staff worked with Georgia Power to address the concerns that were raised during the IRP proceeding.

Throughout the year, EERE Staff monitored Georgia Power’s construction of Self Build solar project at the Moody Air Force Base in Valdosta, GA, a right-of-way solar project in LaGrange, GA, a 3.6 MW community solar facility located in Guyton, GA, and a 2.4 MW community solar facility located in Waynesboro, GA. EERE Staff also worked with Georgia Power and an Independent Evaluator in reviewing bids received for Georgia Power’s Renewable Energy Development Initiative (“REDI”) utility scale and DG programs. This was the second phase of REDI and the RFP requested Renewable energy projects that could either stand alone or be combined with a battery storage facility. This solicitation received proposals for approximately 13,341 MW through 96 proposals from 31 unique bidders.

The REDI utility scale RFP resulted in a 150 MW solar facility in Brooks County, Georgia, a 213 MW solar facility with a smoothing storage device in Decatur County, Georgia, and a 195.5 MW solar facility with a firming storage device for a combined capacity of 558.5 MW. All projects will begin commercial operation on November 20, 2021. The average cost of the winning bids over the 30-year terms is approximately 3.4 cents per kilowatt hour therefore providing significant energy savings for Georgia Power customers. The DG RFP resulted in Commission approval of 38 DG projects for a combined capacity of approximately 87 MW. The solar

resources procured through RFPs are projected to provide downward pressure on rates through reduced fuel costs.

EERE Staff also oversaw Georgia Power's Demand Side Management (DSM) and Energy Efficiency (EE) programs, reviewed Georgia Power's Annual DSM True-Up to verify program spending and cost recovery, and reviewed the Evaluation Measurement and Verification (EM&V) Reports for the certified programs and several pilots, two of which are new certified DSM programs. EERE Staff provided oversight to the development of the new program offerings that were approved in the 2019 IRP including the ongoing development of new low income-qualified program offerings. Four Commercial and four Residential programs will carry over from the 2017-2019 program cycle, though there were major changes to implementers, eligible measures, and program delivery that require keen oversight to ensure continued success for the DSM portfolio.

The DSM programs approved during the 2019 IRP include a Residential Thermostat Demand Response Program which will use smart thermostats to reduce peak demand in both summer and winter. Second, a Commercial Behavioral Program that will send electronic and paper reports to help customers understand their usage and ways to reduce energy consumption. The Income-Qualified (Crowd-Funding) Program replaced the Energy Assessment and Solution Program, which focused on improvements for low-income families, and will offer a path for increased per home spending for families in need through a crowdsource funding portal. This program will double the yearly spending for low-income energy efficiency improvements to over \$4 million and the crowd-funding portion will further expand the available funds. Additionally, an Income-Qualified Tariff Pilot was approved in the IRP. Georgia Power is required to file specific program details for the Income Qualified Tariff by April 1, 2020. This pilot will allow for 500 customers to invest up to \$7,500 in energy efficiency improvements with no upfront cost to the customer. The customer will then pay the investment back through a charge that will appear on the customer's bill. This pilot will allow low income customers to make the necessary improvements to their homes, receive the benefits of bill savings and improved home conditions without the barrier of upfront costs or having to secure a loan for the improvements.

FACILITIES PROTECTION UNIT

SUMMARY

During 2019, the Pipeline Safety Inspectors of the Facilities Protection Unit monitored and inspected over 1,200 miles of transmission lines, nearly 44,000 miles of distribution pipeline, and more than 2 million service lines for transporting natural gas to Georgia customers within 158 counties. The pipeline safety inspectors evaluated operator compliance with state and federal pipeline safety regulations by conducting 230 inspections, including 16 Anti-Drug & Alcohol inspections, over 1,100 inspection days.

Challenges in 2019 continued in Facilities Protection, as the group continued to enforce the Georgia Underground Facilities Protection Act, Federal, and State rules and regulations, as well as implementing continuing regulations, while facing staff turn-over and the loss of pipeline safety inspectors to the private sector.

The Commission continued its other damage prevention efforts in 2019 by delivering 23 presentations by GUFPA investigators to over 1,094 attendees. The GUFPA Staff's participation in these meetings continues to strengthened the Commission's relationship with various groups across Georgia who are dedicated to damage prevention. These groups include, but are not limited to, Georgia Utility Contractor's Association, Plumbing Mechanical Contractors Association, Georgia Onsite Wastewater Association, and the Georgia Utility Coordinating Council.

Facilities Protection Unit

The Facilities Protection Unit (FPU) of the Georgia Public Service Commission is composed of two distinct areas: Pipeline Safety and GUFPA (Damage Prevention) enforcement.

The pipeline safety function is carried out under an agreement with the Pipeline and Hazards Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). Pipeline safety inspectors are responsible for enforcing federal regulations for the safe installation and operation of natural gas pipelines. The year 2019 marked the 51st year of the Commission's relationship with PHMSA.

The Commission assumed responsibility for damage prevention efforts in 2000, following passage of the Georgia Utility Facility Protection Act ("GUFPA") Law. The goals of GUFPA are to prevent injury to Georgia citizens, and damage to buried utilities by requiring those who want to perform mechanized excavation to call 811 before digging, so facility owners can mark the location of buried utility facilities to avoid damage.

Pipeline Safety

Pipeline Safety inspected master meters, municipals, and private operators during 2019. This is no small task, given the number of operators and geography of the state. Of Georgia's 159

counties, intrastate natural gas is transported through 149 of them. The Table below illustrates the various types of inspections that were performed in 2019.

Inspection Type	Inspections
Standard Comprehensive	37
Design, Testing, and Construction	11
Anti-Drug & Alcohol	16
Integrity Management	62
Operator Qualification	15
Investigating Incidents or Accidents	12
Compliance Follow-up	53
Public Awareness	44
TOTAL	230

These numbers vary each year depending on the type of inspection. Each inspector must conduct a compliance follow-up inspection if there are current or remaining violations. Oftentimes, the follow-up inspection can take as many days as the actual inspection.

Georgia Utility Facility Protection Act (GUFPA) Enforcement

Efforts to prevent damage to buried utilities in Georgia stem from the requirements of the Georgia Utility Facility Protection Act of 2000 which assigns responsibility for enforcement to the Georgia Public Service Commission.

Facilities Protection is one of the few areas where Commission jurisdiction extends beyond the electric, telephone and natural gas industries. The PSC is responsible for enforcing the Call Before You Dig laws for all utility facilities. During 2019 system owners and operators reported 6,458 incidents where facilities were damaged. Over 50% of the damages were to natural gas lines, while the remaining damages were to non-gas facilities.

Reported Damages in 2019	
Natural Gas	3,421
Telephone	1,853
Electric	436
Cable TV	569
Water	175
Sewer	4
Total Non-Gas Incidents	3,036
Total Damages Reported	6,458

Staff investigated 3,524 incidents for alleged violations of the GUFPA law. The enforcement actions during the year included mailing 195 hearings notices, 826 consent agreements, and 211 final orders. The Commission's Hearing Officer heard 63 cases. Of the 2,253 cases closed, 1,103 related to damaged natural gas lines. These cases concluded with the Commission's levying \$7,293,610 in civil penalties, of which \$5,356,110 was mitigated with training.

To prevent incidents due to excavators' failure to appreciate the severity of possible damage when safety regulations are ignored or failure to understand the legal requirements, the PSC gives violators the option of attending safety training in lieu of paying the full civil penalty assessed. In 2019, 771 locators, excavators, and facility owners and operators attended one of the 122 Commission-approved dig law training presentations.

The Commission continued its other damage prevention efforts in 2019 by delivering 23 presentations by GUFPA investigators to over 1,094 attendees. The GUFPA Staff's participation in these meetings continues to strengthen the Commission's relationship with various groups across Georgia who are dedicated to damage prevention. These groups include, but are not limited to, the Georgia Utility Contractor's Association, Plumbing Mechanical Contractors Association, Georgia Onsite Wastewater Association, and the Georgia Utility Coordinating Council.

Training and Pipeline Safety Seminar

The FPU Director continually offers training opportunities to the operators, as well as the option of requesting a conference to discuss any probable violations of the Federal or State pipeline safety rules. Pipeline Safety Staff has spent a great deal of effort traveling throughout Georgia to provide all natural gas municipalities the opportunity to meet with the FPU Staff, to discuss issues or concerns, and to inquire about the Staff's expectations for inspections. The goal is to ensure that the municipal operators located outside of Metro Atlanta have the same opportunities as the operators located in Metro Atlanta.

As in years past, the Staff worked closely with the Georgia Municipal Association ("GMA") Gas Section in 2019 to further educate the municipal's elected officials and city managers on the role of the PSC and State/Federal Regulations. The FPU Director attended the annual GMA conference to specifically discuss the roles and responsibilities for cities with natural gas systems. The annual Pipeline Safety Conference (Pipeline Safety Staff in conjunction with the GMA Gas Section) also provides additional learning and training opportunities for operators, contractors, consultants, etc. This working relationship will continue throughout 2020.

For 2020, the FPU Staff will conduct regional workshops throughout Georgia. This will provide all municipal operators with the opportunity to meet with the Director and discuss issues, questions, etc. The goal of this project is to continue to build a strong and effective working relationship between the PSC and natural gas operators, in order to achieve the ultimate goal of pipeline safety.

National Association

In April 2019, several Staff members attended the National Association of Pipeline Safety Representatives ("NAPSR") Southern Region conference, in North Carolina. This annual meeting is held in eight Southeastern states and serves to have regional pipeline safety departments meet and discuss regulations and other topics.

The NAPSRS held its national meeting in September 2018 in Portland, Maine. The FPU Director attended this meeting. During the 2019 National Meeting, Michelle Thebert remained on the NAPSRS Board as the Treasurer. Her responsibilities include ensuring the NAPSRS Administrative Manager is compensated appropriately and balancing the books of the organization.

Additional Facility Protection Program Activities

Pipeline Safety Staff continued enforcing the federal public awareness regulations, including, Drug and Alcohol, Operator Qualifications, Construction, Comprehensive Inspections, Integrity Management, etc. during 2019. In addition, several Staff members participated in numerous on-site operator training classes to expose operators to more in-depth information on specific regulations, policies, procedures, etc. We hired one new Inspector in 2019, and transferred two GUFPA employees over to pipeline safety. Prior to completing certification, new inspectors are paired with seasoned inspectors. This allows the new employee to train under the more experienced employee, which is invaluable for this type of work, given the steep learning curve.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

Throughout 2019, the Commission continued to maintain the highest standards in performing the administrative functions that enable the Commission to better serve the public by making the most prudent use of its resources. The Commission worked within the constraints of its budget to promote efficiencies and make the maximum use of taxpayers' monies to fulfill its mission.

The Commission's Administration Division, headed by the Executive Director, is comprised of the Executive Secretary, Budget and Fiscal Office, Human Resource Office, Public Information and Legislative Liaison Office and the Office of Operations Support. An overview of the responsibilities and accomplishments of each of these is set forth below.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The Executive Secretary's Office is responsible for receiving all public documents filed at the Commission. The Executive Secretary's responsibilities include scheduling Commission proceedings, assigning hearing officers, signing and certifying Official Orders, and preparing lists of interveners for docketed matters.

In 2019, this Office opened 611 new case dockets; processed 4,364 filed documents; and filed 693 orders prepared for the Chairman's and Executive Secretary's signature. The number of dockets has grown tremendously over the past two decades.

During 2019, the Commission held 81 public hearings constituting either a quorum of the Commission or a hearing officer assigned by the Commission. Matters docketed for public hearing are generally heard by the entire Commission in open session with a majority of the five-member Commission constituting a quorum.

Regular Commission Administrative Sessions are held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Committee meetings are held on the Thursdays prior to Administrative Sessions. The four standing Committees of the Commission are Energy, Facilities Protection, Telecommunications and Administrative Affairs.

BUDGET AND FISCAL OFFICE

The primary role of the Budget and Fiscal Office is to develop the agency's Annual Operating Budget and monitor expenditures to ensure the Commission's compliance with all of its fiscal responsibilities. This task is accomplished, in conjunction with the Executive Director and the PSC Commissioners through interactions with the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) and the Legislative Budget Offices as well as other Commission staff. The Office manages the fiscal responsibilities of the Commission through recommendations and monitoring of requests for the agency's State and Federal funding, purchasing, asset management and accurate financial reporting of results to Federal, State and other agencies as required or requested. In FY2019, the Budget and Fiscal Office accurately monitored and effectively managed a budget with revenues and expenses of \$11.9 million dollars.

The Office continued to support the State Leadership in meeting all directives to control and reduce the overall budget for the PSC. Continued to enhance analytical and modeling tools implemented to monitor, control and forecast all expenses. Each budget item was analyzed in

great detail and reevaluated in order to submit Budgets for AFY 2020 and FY 2021. In order to achieve its mission, the Office used the OPB Financial Management System to prepare and submit the Commission budget, including all amendments and scheduled allotments of funds.

HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

The Human Resources Office (HRO) strives to meet the employee benefits, payroll, and life-changing needs of the Commission. This office remains available to assist employees in many work-related and personal areas. Our office strives to enhance the work experience and lives of our employees by making them aware of new or updated programs and policy changes by the State. An example of this was the Governor-mandated Sexual Harassment training course. Our agency met the deadline and had 100% participation.

Unlike 2018, there was very little fluctuation in our staff numbers for 2019. Our PIO retired after more than 18 years with the agency, and we hired a seasoned individual with former State experience to replace him. We also hired one Pipeline Safety Inspector.

With each passing year, our Agency staff gets closer to retirement age and we have staff with 30 or more years of service. With this in mind, we expect to lose several employees over the next few years. Human Resources plans to be a strategic partner in assisting the Commission to replenish those with highly qualified individuals.

OFFICE OF OPERATIONS SUPPORT

The Office of Operations Support continued to improve the infrastructure and overall efficiency during 2019. Our team deployed the new website <https://psc.ga.gov> with a responsive design for viewing across various desktop and mobile devices (Figure 1). Our team hardened network security, enhanced video broadcasts and continued work on network data continuity and the State Transparency and Regulatory system STARS.

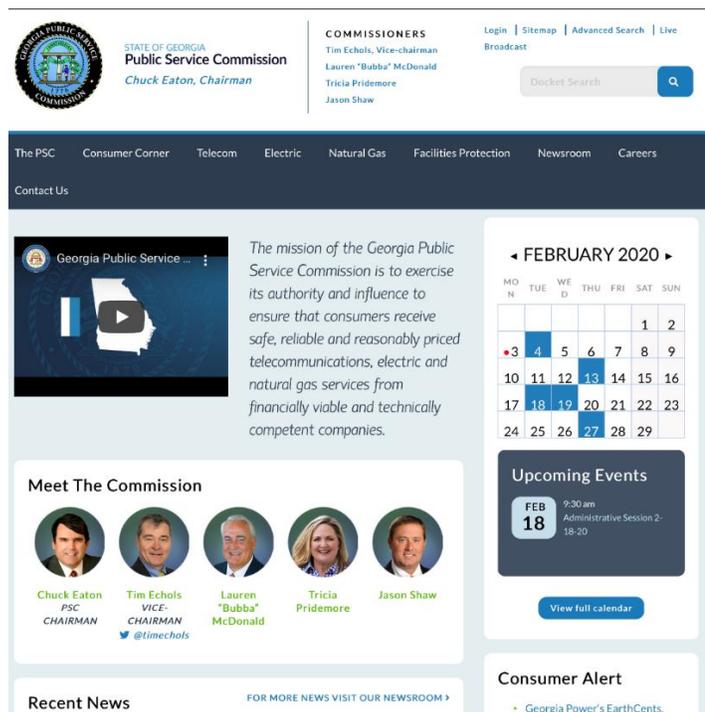


Figure 1: The new Public Service Commission website

The new site and the STARS website went live on July 1, 2019 and included new features to enhance the user experience. Staff and external stakeholders can register, subscribe to a docket and receive notifications when a modification occurs to the filing. The STARS project mission is to provide data transparency, improved functionality and insight for internal and external stakeholders. Our team continues to strive to improve efficiency, productivity and to improve and monitor technology based operations and controls to provide data protection and availability for the network. Video archives are available for viewing on the Public Service Commission YouTube channel as well as the Livestream website <https://livestream.com/PSC>. We produced over 120 Broadcast videos of Commissioner Proceedings for the 2019 calendar year.

During the first six months of the calendar year, the agency received 1,017,333 million page-views on its website. Of these page-views, 12% were mobile visitors, an increase from previous years due to the new reactive website design. The most popular page-views are the Natural Gas List of Certified Marketers the Natural Gas Market price chart and the File and Case Docket tracking search page notably dockets 42516 and 29849 were the most visited filings. During 2019, the objectives of the Operations Support office were to improve enhance network continuity, expand Commission hearing broadcasts user experience and improve work processes with the STARS platform.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND LEGISLATIVE LIAISON OFFICE

The Public Information Office (per O.C.G.A. §46-2-7) coordinates official Commission news releases, media relations and maintains the Commission's public information files. The Office also supervises the Commission's website content and manages the agency's internal communications. As the Commission's Legislative Liaison, the Office coordinates the Commission's legislative agenda. In 2019 the Office responded to numerous legislator inquiries relating to constituent concerns, tracked numerous pieces of legislation that impact the agency and the utilities it regulates, provided daily legislative updates, and coordinated the Commission's analysis and response to legislative proposals.

Local, state and national news media continued extensive coverage of Commission activities and proceedings, such as, the approval of the Georgia Power Integrated Resource Plan, the rate cases for Georgia Power and Atlanta Gas Light, the Plant Vogtle nuclear construction project and the Clean Energy Road show. In 2019, the Public Information Office issued more than 50 news releases and media advisories and responded to more than 100 local, state and national news media inquiries, conducted interviews with local, state and national media; coordinated Commissioner interviews; and produced Commission publications for internal and external use. The PIO also provided public affairs support for Commissioner Echols annual Clean Energy Roadshow.

The Public Information Office continued to use social media by using Twitter to release timely information. The Office also produced four newsletters on a quarterly basis and updated its public information brochures and website information.

In 2019, the public information officer/legislative liaison of 18 years retired, passing the baton to a new PIO/legislative liaison who was hired from staff at the state Senate.

In the 2019 legislative session, legislators introduced a number of bills affecting state government, the Commission and utilities. The Commission monitored a number of bills some of which is provided below, along with their bill sponsors and status:

House Bills Acted on in 2019

House Bill 541 by Rep. Rick Williams. Requires wireless telephone providers to give location information to law enforcement. **Held in House Committee.**

House Bill 711 by Rep. David Dreyer. Sets parameters for the decommission of coal fired electrical plants. **Held in House Committee.**

Senate Bills Acted on in 2019

Senate Bill 2 by Sen. Steve Gooch. Allows EMCs to provide broadband service and sets the PSC as the agency to develop rules and oversee disputes. **Passed by substitute and signed by the Governor.**

Senate Bill 17 by Sen. Steve Gooch. Allows telecom co-ops and their affiliates to provide broadband service. **Passed by substitute and signed by the Governor.**

Senate Bill 100 by Sen. P.K. Martin. Allows for Georgia's telephone program for the physically impaired to include wireless devices. **Passed by substitute and signed by the Governor.**

Legislation Affecting Agency Operations and State Employees

House Bill 30 by Rep. David Ralston and others. Amends the State's Fiscal Year 2019 spending plan. **Passed and signed by the Governor.**

House Bill 31 by Rep. David Ralston and others. Sets the state budget for Fiscal Year 2020 beginning July 1, 2019. **Passed and signed by the Governor.**

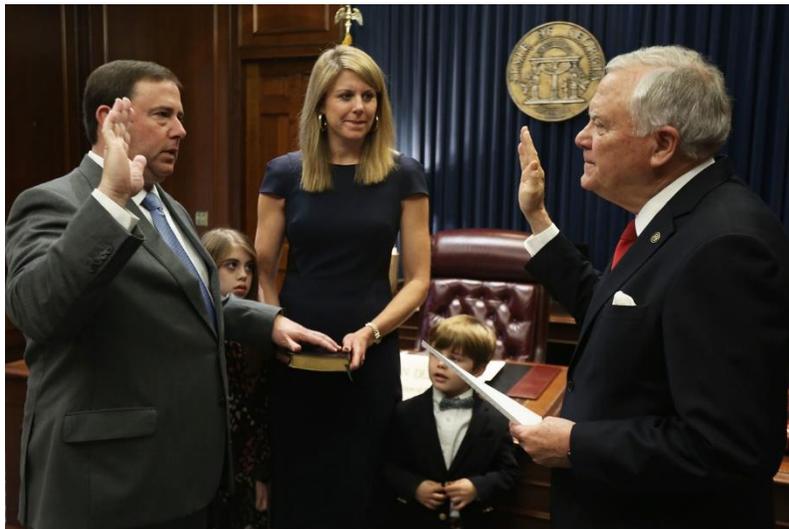
NOTEWORTHY COMMISSION ACTIVITIES IN 2019

Georgia Power IRP Hearing



The Public Service Commission had a busy year in 2019 including two rate cases and the approval of Georgia Power's three-year integrated resource plan.

Commissioner Shaw Takes Office



Governor Nathan Deal administers the Oath of Office to **Commissioner Jason Shaw** on Jan. 3, 2019 as his wife, **Katy**, and children **Anne Harvey** and **Shelton** look on.

Utility Staffer Visits Vietnam



Utility Analyst **Rob Trokey** visited Hanoi, Vietnam to participate in the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners' International Peer Review on Ancillary Services, Direct PPA's and Smart Grids.

Governor Kemp Proclaims April "Safe Digging Month"



Commissioner **Chuck Eaton**, PSC staffers **Lynn Page**, **Michelle Thebert**, **Will Culbreath**, and **Tom Krause** joined utility crews and officials with Georgia 811 as **Gov. Brian Kemp** ratified a petition declaring April "Safe Digging Month."

PIO/Legislative Liaison Bill Edge Retires



Public Information Officer **Bill Edge** retires from the PSC after 18 years. His retirement was recognized with a resolution by the General Assembly.

Commissioner Pridemore Appointed to National Regulatory Subcommittee



The President of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) appointed PSC Commissioner **Tricia Pridemore** to serve on its Subcommittee on Education and Research.

Commissioners Celebrate Floyd Pipeline Upgrade



Commissioners **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald**, **Tim Echols**, and **Chuck Eaton** visited the Rome Floyd Chamber of Commerce to help celebrate the replacement of a 4-inch natural gas pipeline from Rome to International Paper with a new 12-inch line. The public-private partnership included the PSC, Georgia Power, Atlanta Gas Light, International Paper and Rome/Floyd County officials.

Commissioner McDonald Named “Solar Advocate of the Year”



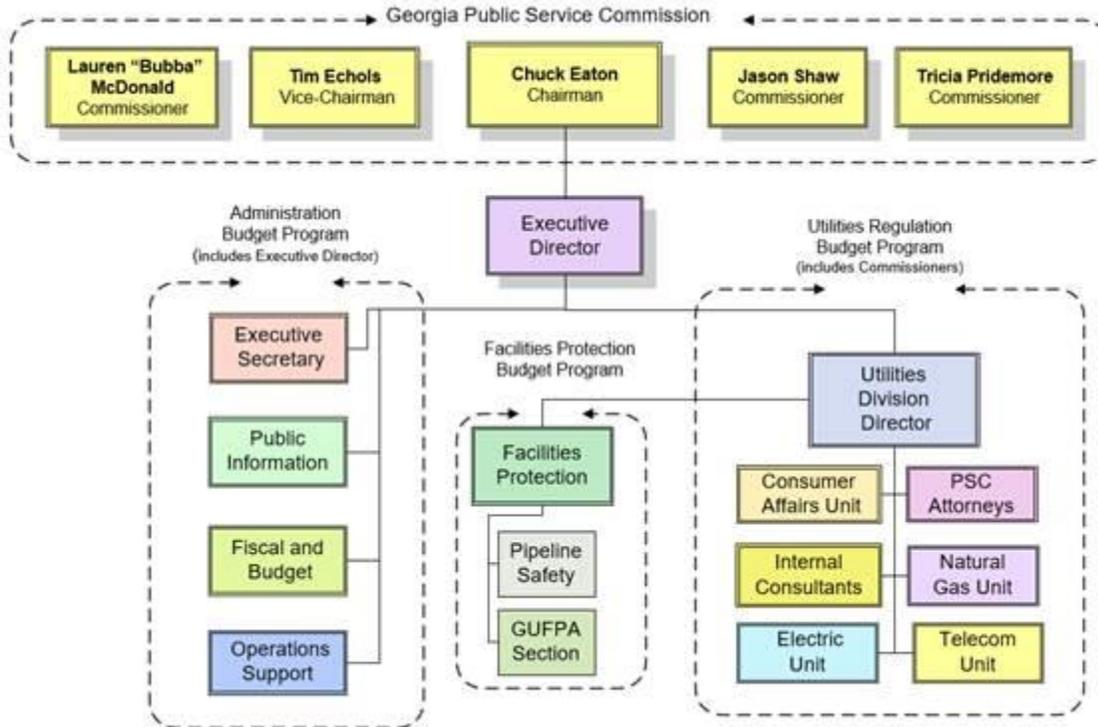
The Georgia Solar Energy Association presented Commission Chairman **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald** with its “Solar Advocate of the Year” award for his long dedication to solar energy and for his hard work expanding solar energy in the state of Georgia.

AGENCY BUDGET
Fiscal Year 2020
Budget

	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020(AOB)
Revenue			
General Assembly Appropriations	\$9,436,759	\$9,699,991	\$10,048,109
Federal and Other Funds	\$2,360,461	\$2,232,158	\$1,343,100
Total	\$11,797,220	\$11,932,149	\$11,391,209
Budgeted Expenditures			
Personal Services	\$9,543,113	\$9,587,555	\$10,192,868
Regular Operating Expenses	\$444,238	\$501,926	\$341,529
Motor Vehicle Purchases	\$407,734	\$0	\$0
Equipment	\$53,709	\$260,235	\$9,000
Computer Charges	\$160,874	\$163,806	\$164,891
Real Estate Rental	\$670,073	\$679,557	\$484,171
Telecommunications	\$95,636	\$102,177	\$96,000
Contractual Services	\$421,843	\$636,893	\$102,750
Total	\$11,797,220	\$11,932,149	\$11,391,209
Associated Revenue			
Regulatory Assessment Fees Paid Directly to Dept. of Revenue	\$1,050,000	\$1,050,000	\$1,050,000
Penalties and Fees Collected and Remitted to State Treasury	\$529,873	\$522,794	\$211,412
Total	\$1,579,873	\$1,572,794	\$1,261,412

**Note: Penalties and Fees
Collected in FY 2020 through
December 31, 2019**

PSC ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2020



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